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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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The Duenna of a Genius.

BY M. E. FRANCIS (MRS. FRANCIS BLUNDELL),

AUTHOR OF 'IN A NORTH COUNTRY VILLAGE,'
'A DAUGHTER OF THE SOIL,' &c.

CHAPTER III.

MOLTO ESPRESSIVO.

'DEAR me, there is a great deal to be done to-day,' announced Lady Mary, fussily, next morning.

'Do, for goodness' sake, let us have our breakfast in peace!' said her nephew, somewhat irritably; adding, inconsequently, 'What is there to be done? The concert is not coming off till this afternoon, is it?'

'Three o'clock,' said Lady Mary; 'punctually. But the play is to be on Thursday, you know, and we must positively have our first rehearsal this morning. I hope you know your part, John.'

'Well, to tell you the truth,' returned Sir John, with a careless laugh, 'I haven't looked at it yet; but it will be all right. You won't have your rehearsal till twelve, or so, I suppose? I'll have a good go at it before then.'

'What part are you going to take?' inquired Valérie, who was sitting opposite.

'Oh, I am always the *jeune premier*. May I ask why you are so much amused, mademoiselle?' For Valérie suddenly uttered a peal of laughter.

'Ah, you are so funny, you people!' she cried. 'I have seen it before. You take the principal part in a piece; you do not

even look at it till just before the rehearsal, and then you think you can act it!’

‘I hope so,’ said Sir John, much nettled. ‘I believe I am supposed to be able to act—am I not, aunt? I know I am bothered often enough to do it.’

‘He is considered one of the best amateurs in England,’ responded Lady Mary, who was both astonished and irate. ‘He never forgets his lines, *never!*’

‘He never forgets his lines!’ echoed Valérie, still brimming over with merriment. ‘As if that was the very beginning of it! Ah, these amateurs! See real actors, people who do nothing else but act all their lives, what do they do when about to perform in a new piece? They study, and study, and study! They rehearse twice a day for weeks and months beforehand; they practise every detail. But when amateurs set about a piece—“Oh yes!” with a quaint unconscious mimicry of Croft’s manner. “The play is to be the day after to-morrow. All right! And the first rehearsal is to be in two hours. Lots of time! They have not looked at their parts yet—but *they’ll* be ready!” Ah,’ suddenly resuming her own tone and manner, ‘it is comic!’

The colour mounted to Croft’s brow: he was young enough to resent being laughed at. Turning suddenly to Margot, who sat beside him, he observed, with a shade of insolence in his tone, ‘Your sister seems to know all about the stage. Has she, perhaps, thought of adopting it as a profession?’

The little lady drew herself up with dignity.

‘My sister’s musical career is quite sufficient for her. The reason,’ she added, colouring, ‘why she knows so much about the ways of actors is that, many years ago, when my father lived, friends of his, who were on the stage, used to come to our house. Some of them even used to amuse themselves by giving lessons to my sister, who was then a child.’

The very simplicity of the explanation made Croft feel unaccountably ashamed of himself.

He observed, in a propitiatory tone, that *that* indeed was an advantage which few amateurs could hope for.

‘Such a good thing for us,’ said Lady Mary. ‘I hear you both act quite splendidly. They are each to have a part in my piece,’ she explained, looking round the table.

‘Dear me, I feel quite nervous!’ said Sir John, and he really was.

Never before had he studied his part so assiduously, and never before was his performance so lame and awkward. His

embarrassment augmented during the progress of the rehearsal, for he fancied that every now and then he detected a gleam of amusement in the eyes of Valérie.

In the closing scene it became indeed sufficiently evident that he was a source of very great entertainment to the little violinist, to whom it was his business to make love. She was supposed in this—the climax of the piece—to be convulsed with jealous grief, and he, as the lover, should have been stricken with dismay, and have exerted all the tender arts of which he was capable to soothe and reassure her. Sir John duly fell upon his knees, and was beginning his expostulations, much hampered by the endeavour to remember his cues and to be quite sure of his lines. Valérie meanwhile was apparently violently sobbing; but by-and-by he discovered, to his chagrin, that the face behind the handkerchief was dimpling with smiles, and that Valérie's shoulders were heaving, not with sobs, but with suppressed laughter.

'I should really like to know what caused you so much amusement just now,' he inquired, when his labours were at length over.

'Because you were so funny,' said Valérie, wiping her eyes. 'Ah, you cannot think how funny you looked and how drolly you spoke! I must laugh when I think of it! When you said you loved me, you were so stiff, with your English *mauvaise honte*, it was as if you said the grace before meat.'

'How should I have said it?' inquired Croft, with that tinge of impertinence which is so often the resource of the nettled young man.

'If there is time after luncheon,' returned Valérie, without appearing to notice his manner, 'and we can find a quiet place in which to exercise ourselves, I will show you.'

After luncheon, therefore, while Valérie was standing by an open French window, sipping her coffee, he approached her, reminding her of the project of the morning; pique and curiosity, as well as ever-growing interest, making him determined to secure the promised lesson.

'And the retired place?' she asked, slightly lifting her eyebrows and looking round the crowded room.

'Let us go out into the garden,' suggested Croft; 'down there, in that far terrace, we shall be most secluded.'

'Come then, Margot,' cried Valérie, catching her sister by the sleeve; 'come, let us give monsieur a *répétition* all to himself.'

They slipped unperceived through the window, and hastened

to the spot indicated, Valérie in front flying down the smooth sward, and skipping from slope to slope, while Croft and Margot followed more sedately.

'Is this the place?' she asked, tripping through an arch in the tall yew-hedge which bounded the last terrace, and pausing in the midst of the sunlit enclosure of the other side to clap her hands. 'Ah, how beautiful! This is fairyland.'

In the midst of the velvet lawn surrounded by the tall closely clipt hedge a fountain splashed lazily in a time-worn stone basin; banks of flowers climbed upwards from the smooth sod to meet the hedge, and at the further end the quaint rustic door of a thatched summer-house stood invitingly open.

After flitting round these charming premises, and taking note of all that was to be seen, Valérie suddenly became businesslike.

'Now, Margot, take the book,' she cried. 'You must tell us when we go wrong—or, rather, when monsieur goes wrong; he is not as yet quite perfect in his part. Ah, this little house might have been made on purpose; I will sit here. Now you come in; you find me *tout en pleurs*, your heart has melted, and you endeavour to console me—is it not so? Let us begin—I am weeping, you see. *Alas! alas! that he should be so cruel!* . . . Now, then, why do you not come?'

'What is it I say?' inquired Croft, in an agonised whisper, of Margot.

Margot hastily referred to the page. 'You say, *Cecilia crying—really crying! Is it possible that, after all, she has a heart?*'

'Oh yes, of course; I forgot,' said Croft, proceeding quickly, '*Cecilia crying—really crying.*'

Here he lurched violently against one of the rustic tables in the summer-house, and paused to move it out of his way—'*Is it possible that, after all, she has a heart? Cecilia darling, can this be for me?* I beg your pardon, mademoiselle; but I cannot possibly fall on my knees here—there isn't room.'

'Do you suppose,' said Valérie, whisking round so as to face him, 'that if you were really and truly very much—how do you say?—in love, you would first of all think about a table, and afterwards hesitate as to a convenient spot for kneeling down? But there—we will put the chair on to the lawn, where there is plenty of room, and you can try again. Now, remember, you must not think of anything in the world but me!'

Croft glanced at her hastily; he himself was very much excited, but there was not the slightest shade of coquetry in her

face or manner. He felt that he was losing his head a little, and in his anxiety to pull himself together, and avoid a warmth which might offend her, he assumed a casual and nonchalant air which drew down a severe reprimand.

'This will really never do,' she said; 'you have not the beginning of an idea of the part. Margot, I think you and I must show him. I will be the lover, see; and you must be Cecilia. Now: *the lover enters and finds Cecilia weeping.*'

Never in his life had Croft seen so curious and pretty a performance. Valérie was a very wonder. Her quaint assumption of the emotions of the strong man, the passion which mastered the previous jealousy, and then the sudden change to tenderness, filled Croft with amused admiration. But presently he found himself watching the other sister with, if possible, greater interest. Her rendering of the heroine's part was pretty—almost perfect in its way; and yet what most struck the young man was the fact that for her the personality of her sister was never for an instant effaced. She uttered the coquettish lines assigned to her with a kind of sweet indulgence infinitely touching; she suffered herself to be conquered by her ardent little lover, and spoke heartfelt words of tenderness in return; but it was sisterly love which shone in her eyes, it was Margot Kostolitz who at the close enfolded her little Valérie with caressing arms, not Cecilia sinking into the embraces of her admirer.

'You must try and do it like that,' said Valérie, rising at length and wiping away real tears. 'Just like that, with true fire and feeling. You are quite desperate about Cecilia, you know.'

Croft did not answer: he was moved, and excited, and puzzled. Valérie's advice surprised him, but the absolute simplicity with which it was delivered prevented his vanity from being tickled in the smallest degree. It was solely from an artistic point of view, and with the most disinterested motives, that she desired him to throw more energy into his fictitious love-making.

While he was considering her, without speaking, she suddenly slipped past him, sliding her feet daintily along the velvet sward.

'How deliciously smooth it is!' she cried. 'The fairies might dance here! Ah, the good idea—this is the fairies' ball-room. Look, monsieur, I will show you what they do when the moon comes out, and all the birds are gone to bed, and the dew comes down softly, softly, to kiss the flowers in their sleep.'

While speaking she had been gathering and arranging some large roses, placing the stalks between her fingers so that the heads drooped downwards.

'See,' she cried, 'these are the fairy castanets. They are dumb for us, poor dull mortals; but when the fairies dance, they make exquisite music. Now, Margot, since the fairies are not here, you must sing for me.'

Margot obeyed, her voice being sweet and low-pitched, but not very powerful; and, flinging her arms above her head, and feigning to rattle her scented castanets, Valérie began to dance. It seemed to John Croft that this performance of hers was even more full of beauty and poetry than her music. The buoyant graceful figure seemed scarcely to touch the ground, the lovely little face was uplifted in ecstasy, its expression changing every moment; each movement, full of new grace and charm, seemed to convey a fresh surprise to the onlooker. She was a dream—a poem in herself. There was, indeed, something so unusual, so unreal, in the whole scene, that Sir John could hardly believe he was gazing at it with actual bodily vision. The beauty of the spot, full of light and bloom, made a fit background for this airy figure. The sunlight glorified her white dress; the petals of the roses, loosened by the rapid motion, floated round her; the soft tendrils of her hair, catching the light as she moved, made a shifting, varying nimbus.

He watched her, holding his breath. All too soon she stopped, with a little laughing curtsey.

'Now we must go and get ready for our concert,' she said.

'Ah, mademoiselle,' cried Croft eagerly, 'if you would but dance after the play to-morrow, you would bring down the house!'

Valérie burst out laughing. 'Think how it would look in the playbills!' she cried. '*Mademoiselle Valérie Kostolitz will execute a pas seul of her own composition.*'

'You are talking nonsense, Valérie,' interrupted Margot, severely; then, turning towards Sir John with flashing eyes, she continued:—

'You are quite mistaken in supposing, sir, that my sister would ever consent to dance in public. Indeed, I cannot conceive what has now led her to indulge in this *enfantillage*.'

'Ta, ta, ta, my little sister!' cried Valérie; 'if I danced, you also sang.'

'There is nothing to laugh at,' returned Margot, still with hot cheeks and angry eyes; 'you should not talk as you do—you should not behave as you sometimes do. You make people imagine strange things.'

Valérie became suddenly quite meek and subdued. 'Of course I was only joking,' she explained; 'naturally I should never think of dancing in public.'

'And, indeed,' interposed Croft, taking the reproof to himself, 'I assure you I never imagined anything at all. I merely made the suggestion—which I now see was a foolish one—because I thought it a pity that other people should not be as much delighted as I.'

But Margot was not to be appeased: she began to walk towards the house, her small figure very erect, her head thrown back.

'Mademoiselle Valérie Kostolitz is a musician,' she observed presently, 'a musician and nothing else.'

'*Mais certainement*,' agreed Valérie, still meekly.

To Croft's surprise the meekness was quite genuine. The parts appeared to be reversed; it was the elder sister who now required to be propitiated.

When, an hour later, however, they appeared on the platform of the Brackenhurst Town Hall, her face had resumed its customary expression of patient, tender watchfulness.

The first item of the programme had been a glee, sung more or less correctly by the members of Lady Mary's village choir; a performance which had given the greatest possible satisfaction to the relatives of those concerned, while it had called forth a good deal of adverse criticism from those among the audience who were interested in other choirs. Then a lusty young doctor from the neighbourhood had sung a rollicking sea-song in a prodigious bass voice. Valérie, who succeeded him, looked oddly out of place; and the audience scarcely appreciated the excellence of her rendering of one of Brahms's dances. Some genuine music-lovers did indeed applaud vehemently, and make frantic endeavours to obtain a recall, but the greater number of those present were anxious for the next tit-bit of the musical bill of fare—namely, the advent of 'A Gentleman of the Town,' who had promised a nigger song in character. Therefore, when the Kostolitzes had retired, trembling with excitement, shrieks of delight greeted the appearance of this personage, who, exceedingly jocular, with blackened face and enormous collar, proceeded to announce in a cracked voice that 'there was something very funny in his rummy-tum-tum.'

He was encored, it need not be said; indeed, no doubt the 'Gentleman of the Town' made the hit of the evening, though when the two Misses Brown-Jones (daughters of Canon Brown-

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Jones), appropriately attired in the Italian peasant costumes which they had worn at last year's Hunt Ball, warbled 'The Danube River,' it was universally acknowledged that they ran him very hard. Then it was Valérie's turn again. She played a 'Légende' of Wieniauski's with exquisite charm and grace, and again was applauded rapturously by a few, tolerantly by many, impatiently by the rest, and no encore.

When she had withdrawn, she looked at her sister; her eyes were full of tears, her lips pale.

'I will not play again,' she cried; 'I have done with these people!'

'But, Valérie! I implore you; your name is down again twice—dear, everything must have a beginning. When they know you, they will appreciate you.'

'I will *not* go back,' said Valérie; 'it kills me.'

'Oh, *chérie, chérie*, think if all this—if our visit results in complete failure—if Lady Mary Bracken and her friends are offended! I beg of you, conquer yourself!'

'No,' said Valérie doggedly; she had put away her violin in its case, and now sat down folding her hands. 'Decidedly I play no more; it is finished.'

Pale and aghast, Margot stepped to the side of the stage, and made signs to Sir John, who was sitting at the end of the front row.

'What is to be done?' she cried agitatedly; 'my sister will not play again. She says she cannot—oh, what an audience this is! Please, please, intercede for us with your aunt, that she may not be too angry—tell her I will play—sing—anything——'

'Why do you not desire your sister to play?' asked Croft. 'She seems to mind what you tell her, generally.'

'No, no. In a question like this it would be hopeless—nothing would move her. Ah, monsieur, you do not know what it is to be the duenna of a genius!'

Sir John made his way towards his aunt, and informed her, mendaciously, that Mademoiselle Kostolitz had been taken suddenly ill, and was, indeed, feeling so faint that it would be impossible for her to appear again that afternoon; her sister, he added, would, however, be delighted to take her place.

Lady Mary was much concerned. 'Poor thing!' she cried, 'I dare say she feels the room stuffy,—it *is* stuffy, you know. Look here, John, do take her to the Training Institute; they'll know what to do for her there—they'll look after her, and give her sal-

volatile, and all that. Tell her it does not in the least matter about her not playing any more. We'll manage very nicely—I am sure the Brown-Joneses will sing again, and Mr. Brooks will bring out his banjo. Do you know that is Brooks the ironmonger? Doesn't he do it well? All the people are delighted!

So while the Misses Brown-Jones fluttered gently 'Through the Woods,' entirely to the satisfaction of the audience, and Mr. Brooks repeated the refrain 'Jam, jam, jam,' till his already cracked voice threatened to be extinguished altogether, Sir John, after hastily explaining to Margot the subterfuge of which he had been guilty, escorted the Sisters Kostolitz to the open air, and put them into a cab.

'You had better drive straight home,' he said. 'You can tell Lady Mary that you preferred to go back and rest.'

Valérie did not hear him. She had flung her arms round Margot's neck, and burst into a passion of tears. 'Ah, Margot, Margot,' she sobbed, 'I have failed—I have failed. No one believes in me but you!'

CHAPTER IV.

CAPRICCIOSO.

MARGOT announced to her hostess that evening that her sister was still too much indisposed to come down to dinner. Lady Mary was full of sympathy and kind suggestions on Valérie's behalf; there was nothing conceivable, indeed, which she did not offer to the invalid, from champagne to a hot bottle. Margot, however, would only permit a cup of soup.

'And even that she will not drink,' she said in an undertone to Sir John Croft, who was standing by. 'When Valérie is like that, she will touch nothing. She is lying on the floor in her room, and she will speak to no one.'

'Surely,' said Sir John, 'she is taking the matter too much to heart. After all, her playing was as much appreciated as she could expect in a place like this, and with such an audience. If they prefer the gigantic collars of Mr. Brooks, the ironmonger, to your sister's exquisite playing, their bad taste is a thing to be laughed at, not to weep over.'

'To be laughed at!' repeated Margot, with a quivering lip. 'If you knew how we counted on that concert! The preparations we made! How she looked forward, the poor little thing! to what we thought would be a triumph! And now—oh, I cannot bear to

think of it!—now we must begin all over again. This has not advanced us one bit, and it is so hard to make one's way all alone in your big London. Nobody knows us, nobody will help us—we two have to fight our own battles, and sometimes it is very hard work.'

At this moment the signal was given for moving in to dinner, and Croft was reluctantly obliged to leave Margot's side, and escort a particularly uninteresting dowager.

Throughout the repast he was even more abstracted than on the previous evening. The vision of little Valérie lying on the floor, weeping, and refusing to be comforted, haunted him painfully. What a contrast between the picture thus conjured up, and that which had so pleasantly lingered in his mind during the afternoon!—that sunny, laughing image, with white draperies so gracefully swaying, and rose-leaves floating downwards from her uplifted hands. Every now and then he looked across the table at Margot, her pale face and dejected air filling him with compassion. Her outburst of confidence had moved him deeply. Not often, he fancied, did this proud and self-possessed young woman permit herself to speak of the struggles of her lot; and what struggles they were! Poor little Babes in the Wood! how could they hope to find their way in the great wilderness where fate had thrown them? And yet, no doubt, Valérie only required to be known, to be heard in the right places and by the proper people, to make a name for herself. He must have another talk with Margot, and see what could be done. Surely they must have *some* friends—they could not have come to London without any introductions whatsoever. He would speak to his aunt very seriously. If she had taken these little people up, she must not drop them. If she would write about them to those hosts of friends of hers, it would at least help to make them known. He himself would try what he could do in that way. If they wanted pupils, he would find them some. Here Croft, much pleased at the idea of enacting the part of the Fairy Godmother, smiled a beneficent smile to himself, and then, glancing at Margot, felt almost irritated with her for looking so sad.

After dinner, Margot went upstairs to see her sister, but had returned and was seated in the drawing-room when Croft entered it.

'How is Mademoiselle Valérie?' he inquired, sitting down beside her.

'I do not know; her door was locked, and she would not let me in.'

'Isn't that rather naughty of her?' asked Sir John.
'She is like that,' answered Margot, with a dejected little shrug of her shoulders; adding presently, 'It has gone deep with her.'

'Are you two talking about the concert?' inquired Lady Mary, passing by. 'Your sister played charmingly,' nodding across at Margot, 'and didn't the Brown-Jones girls look nice? It was my idea their wearing those Italian peasant dresses—pleases people, you know. Every one was delighted! Altogether my concert was a very great success.'

She passed on, evidently under the impression that she had said a pleasant thing; and Margot looked at Sir John.

'A success!' she said.

'Come, you must not be so down-hearted,' returned Sir John, kindly, if a little vaguely. 'All will come right in time. Your sister only requires a fair hearing—once known, she cannot fail to be appreciated.'

'But the difficulty is to get known. We knew no one when we came. We have made a few acquaintances now, but even they,' with a little sigh, 'are not of the sort I want.'

'Good heavens!' said Croft, half involuntarily, 'what induced you to come to London?'

Margot drew herself up. 'I have always wished my sister to make her *début* in London,' she said, a little stiffly; adding hurriedly, 'We shall do very well after a little time. It must take time, of course; but we have already a small connection, and soon we shall have more pupils.'

'Ah! you take pupils,' said Croft, thoughtfully. 'Of course, I had forgotten! Will you accept me as a pupil?'

She looked up suspiciously, but he was quite serious.

'I should like to learn the violin,' he pursued.

Margot burst out laughing.

'Are you only thinking of beginning now? I fear, it is a little late.'

'Then,' said Sir John, 'I will take a course of singing lessons. I have a voice, I assure you—quite a nice one, people tell me—and I have had some lessons before, but I never had time to go in for it seriously.'

'Everything is worth doing seriously, if you do it at all,' said Margot, gravely. 'Have you time to study music now? Because, otherwise, I should not care to teach you.'

'I have time now,' said Sir John; 'I have more time than I

know what to do with. But when I first went in for music I was really rather a busy man—well, busy for a man, you know,—a young man.'

'What did you do?'—still seriously.

'Well, I was in diplomacy, you see, and I entertained wild dreams of making a mark in the world. I had mapped out a career for myself—Lord knows all I was going to do! I used to study and read and write all kinds of things which I thought might possibly one day help me to get on in the world. And so,' breaking off with a light laugh, 'I really did not have much time for music.'

'And now?' said Margot, with a little interrogative lifting of the eyebrows.

'Oh! now I am a man of leisure. My uncle was kind enough to die a few years ago in the most unexpected manner, and I have stepped into his shoes. There is no need for me to work now.'

'No need!'

'No; I am perfectly comfortable. I never want to be any better off than I am; so why make a slave of oneself?'

'Then you work no more at anything? Oh, what a life! If I were a man, no matter how rich I might be, I would still aim at making a mark in the world. I would have a career, I would do something with my life! To be idle—to do nothing, because you are rich enough—what a miserable view of existence!'

'Don't!' said Croft, reddening; 'you are so dreadfully energetic you make me feel quite uncomfortable.'

'If I were a man,' went on Margot, without heeding, 'and a rich man like you, what would I *not* do! You are, I suppose,' looking at him with a quaintly contemplative air, 'not much more than thirty, and yet you have calmly made up your mind to settle down to a life of idleness. You should be ashamed.'

'I am ashamed!' said Croft, meekly. 'I am going to begin my new career by learning singing. Will you, or your sister, teach me?'

'I will teach you,' said Margot quickly, and with, he fancied, a shade of *hauteur*. 'My sister does not give lessons.'

'I will come and see you in town, then, if I may,' said the young man; 'and we can settle all about it then. But, do you know, I am almost afraid of you; you are so severe!'

'I fear I was rather rude,' said Margot, 'but I feel strongly on that point. I have worked so hard all my life, but there is so

little I can do—when I see people who could do much, and will not try, it makes me angry.'

At this moment Lady Mary Bracken invited Margot to go to the piano. They wanted to have a little dancing in the hall, she said. 'Would Mademoiselle Kostolitz be so kind as to play?'

Mademoiselle Kostolitz was, of course, delighted, and Sir John was borne off by his aunt to do his share of the entertainment. Later in the evening he informed Margot that he had for once worked hard enough to please even her, having danced with six damsels, all as heavy as lead and as stupid as owls.

Next morning Valérie breakfasted in her room; Margot seemed anxious and ill at ease, and Sir John Croft, fancying that he detected a kind of mute appeal in her eyes, took his place beside her at table, presently inquiring, 'What is the matter? Has not your sister recovered herself yet?'

'I am in such a difficulty,' said Margot, speaking low and hurriedly. 'Valérie is packing.'

'Packing! Does she mean to go away to-day, then?'

'Yes, at once—directly after breakfast.'

'But she cannot,' said Croft, decidedly. 'There is the play to-night. She cannot leave before that!'

'I know; I have told her,' said Margot, sorrowfully, 'but she will not listen. She says she is miserable in this place, and that she could never face these people again.'

'Is not that somewhat unreasonable?' inquired Sir John. 'My aunt will be very much hurt if she upsets all her arrangements at the last moment, and prevents the play from taking place. After all,' with gathering irritation, 'it is not Lady Mary's fault that the people about here are so,' he hesitated for an epithet, 'so turnip-headed.'

'I know—I know,' agreed Margot, deeply distressed. 'I have said everything I can think of, but she will not listen. She has packed her own box, and now she is packing mine.'

Sir John knit his brows. 'I confess I do not understand you, mademoiselle. I know that, when you like, you can make your sister obey you; now you apparently wish me to believe that you have no authority over her.'

'No; you do not understand,' returned Margot, almost tearfully. 'When Valérie is quite herself, I can almost always manage her; but every now and then she takes a fit, a freak—I do not know what you call it—and then she will go her own way in spite

of me. She is often sorry afterwards, *par exemple*; but then the mischief is done.'

'The mischief will be considerable this time,' said Croft. 'There will be a fine row when my aunt hears you are going. Naturally she will talk—she is rather a good hand at that—and her friends will talk, and will do your sister a great deal of harm. Seriously, you must make her change her mind.'

He was very much in earnest—and, moreover, exceedingly annoyed. He had on the previous evening devoted much time and thought to the maturing of certain benevolent plans for the benefit of these young people, but for the furtherance of most of these schemes he had counted upon Lady Mary's aid; and this foolish, wilful, touchy little genius was going to draw down upon herself the implacable wrath of that lady and her following.

'Tell your sister she must not go away,' he said; adding, as Margot replied by an exasperating little shrug, 'Look here, I will speak to her myself. Just tell her I want to say one word to her—ask her if she will come down for a moment to the terrace.'

Breakfast being over, Margot went in search of her sister, whom she found wrestling with the strap of her trunk. On hearing Sir John's request Valérie paused for a moment, frowning. 'What does he want me for?'

'How should I know?' returned Margot, with a deprecatory gesture. 'You had better go and ask him.'

'I warn you,' said Valérie, looking very determined, 'that I will not be persuaded to remain—my mind is quite made up. Go and tell Lady Mary Bracken that we return to town to-day, and ask at what time a train leaves.'

'*C'est bon, c'est bon*,' said Margot, composedly. 'Meanwhile go and speak to Sir John.'

She sat down on the bed while Valérie went downstairs, but, in spite of her assumption of unconcern, she listened with a very anxious heart for her sister's returning footsteps. At last they sounded in the passage without, rapid and bounding. The door was thrown open, and Valérie appeared, her face wreathed in smiles.

'We remain,' she announced.

Margot was careful not to express too much satisfaction.

'Ah, you have changed your mind,' she said quietly.

'Sir John has changed my mind,' returned Valérie. 'He is

very amusing—Sir John. Decidedly I like him—it is because I like him that I remain. Do not make such big eyes, my Margot! See, I am quite in a good humour again. I am no longer *spleenée*. Now, if you want to be very nice, you will unpack those great big boxes again. You see, I am so tired—so tired! It was such hard work getting everything in; so now you, my little sister, may take your turn, and pull everything out again. *Du reste*, it is much easier.'

'O Valérie, Valérie,' said Margot with a smile, half reproachful and half tender, 'you will always be a child.'

'And you will always be a grandmother,' cried Valérie, dancing round her. 'No, a grandfather—a patriarch; that is more venerable still—Patriarch Margot! *Tiens!* it is an idea that. I will call you my patriarch, my *Bon-papa*. You remember in "*Le Petit Chose*" how the hero calls his brother "*La mère Jacques*"? I thought the idea so pretty—I love that book, though you would not let me finish it because you said it was not for young girls. So now I shall call you Grandfather Margot. *Au revoir, Bon-papa*. I am going downstairs to make Sir John rehearse. He was so funny about the rehearsal; if you had heard him, you would have laughed! He said, if I went away, his career as an actor would come to an end—he is funny, with his career! If he depended on acting for his daily bread, I think he would starve, poor man! Now I am going downstairs to teach him to say "*I love you, Cecilia*," in tones a little less icy than those he used yesterday. Meanwhile you can unpack the trunks.'

'I will come too,' said Margot, quickly; 'the trunks can wait. You will want me to prompt for you.'

'Oh, as for that, I know his part and mine too. Let us see—how does it go? *Cecilia, from the first moment I saw you, I felt my heart flame*. O Margot, do you remember how he said it yesterday? It might have been the multiplication table! But now I am going—no, no, you need not come; I think he will be less shy if we are alone. Besides, I do want you to get those boxes out of the way.'

Instead of unpacking the boxes, however, Margot sat quite still, after her sister left her, looking puzzled and perturbed. The suddenness with which, at the instance of Sir John, Valérie had made the concession previously so persistently refused, startled the anxious little sister. She was even conscious of a twinge of jealousy—this stranger had prevailed where she had failed. Then Valérie's beaming face, her repeated announcements that

she liked Sir John, her suggestion that he would be less shy without Margot's presence, all roused vague feelings of alarm and disquietude. As Margot sat upon the bed, her small slight hands clasped round her knees, she began to wonder if she had done well to confide in this man. After all, what did she know of him? He was certainly kind and good-natured, and apparently anxious to befriend them; but was not this sudden display of interest on the part of a perfect stranger in itself a little suspicious?

Margot coloured and bit her lips as she thought of their conversation on the previous evening. She had talked to him of their struggles, their poverty—why had she been so foolish? What could she suppose a handsome, careless young *flâneur* like Sir John Croft could care about the hardships of two poor little unknown artists? Her recital had doubtless merely aroused a kind of vague curiosity and interest. This idle young man had been idly amused by the glimpse of a mode of life so unlike his own. Yes, he had been amused! He had amused himself by proposing first to learn the violin! To learn the violin! The violin! At thirty! Surely that alone might have shown her how little in earnest he was. Then he had said he would take singing lessons—from Valérie. He was now acting with Valérie; in fact, he was amusing himself with the child. As this thought struck Margot she jumped off the bed, and, without heeding the unpacked boxes, ran hastily downstairs and out of the house, making her way at once to the green enclosure where the private rehearsal of yesterday had taken place. As she approached she could hear voices—Sir John declaiming with far more vigour and energy than before, and Valérie laughing and commending.

When Margot appeared under the arch in the yew hedge, Sir John rose rather hastily from his knees, and Valérie jumped up from the rustic chair on which she had been sitting, and clapped her hands.

'My pupil is making progress,' she cried; '*il avance à grands pas! Ah, je t'assure, nous avons bien travaillé*—have we not, Sir John?' You should hear him say he loves Cecilia now! It is quite another thing.'

Margot glanced anxiously and inquiringly at Sir John; it struck her that he looked rather foolish.

'Since this gentleman is now perfect in his part,' she said coldly, 'it strikes me that you had better come back to the house. You have not yet seen Lady Mary Bracken, remember; and she has been most kindly inquiring about you.'

Valérie made a little pouting grimace. 'It is so nice out here,' she said.

'The general rehearsal will take place immediately.'

'*Bon,*' said Valérie, 'let us go to the general rehearsal. Do not forget my instructions, Mr. Pupil.'

She darted through the hedge, and danced before them along the terrace.

What a child she was! She could not have been more unconcerned if Sir John Croft had been a little boy of five years old. He amused her; but then, in certain moods, a little boy of five years old would also have amused her. But Sir John? It was very evident that Valérie amused him. Was the game on his part as simple and innocent as on hers?

At the subsequent rehearsal this much at least was evident—Croft had much benefited by Valérie's instructions. No one who now heard him declare his passion for Cecilia could doubt its depth and sincerity. He fell upon his knees in the most natural way in the world; and when Cecilia wept, he dried her tears with all the tenderness conceivable. Poor Margot alone did not rejoice in Sir John's prowess; every one else was delighted.

'I always told you my nephew was an excellent actor,' said Lady Mary; 'but really, this time, I think he surpasses himself. He looks the part so well, doesn't he? The *beau idéal* of a young lover!'

The success of the play was colossal. Every place was taken, and still people crowded in. Lady Mary at first disturbed the equanimity of the performers by issuing sundry directions in a loud whisper:

'Move up, move up—You can get in two or three more there—Bring up a few more benches—Those people at the end will have to stand up, that's all.'

But when she once could be induced to sit down, and leave off crackling her programme, everything went smoothly. The applause was vociferous. At the end of each act Cecilia and her lover were called before the curtain; and at the conclusion they were obliged to return three times, and received quite an ovation.

When Sir John at length led Valérie off the stage, he inquired, looking down at the radiant face beside him, and involuntarily pressing the little fingers which he still held:

'Does not this triumph satisfy you? I think it should make up for your disappointment of the other day.'

The fingers were immediately withdrawn, and the face clouded over.

'Ah,' she said, 'this is quite another thing; this is play, but my music is my life.'

The actors, still in their theatrical gear, joined the rest of the company at supper. As was natural, the hero and heroine of the piece were seated side by side; their health was drunk, and every one was very merry. Valérie seemed to have forgotten her momentary sadness, and was the merriest of all. She was more than merry; she was wild. She spoke of herself as Cecilia, and called Sir John her *fiancé*. Margot, separated from her by half the length of the table, vainly tried to check her by warning glances; but Valérie would not heed. The young duenna's face grew haggard with anxiety beneath its rouge and powder; she was on thorns.

The child meant nothing—no one knew that better than she; but what would other people think? It was so important for Valérie in her position to be prudent, to avoid drawing down upon herself censorious criticism.

'Luckily we are leaving to-morrow,' she said to herself, over and over again, while Valérie laughed and talked nonsense.

But when next morning Sir John put her and her sister into the carriage which was to convey them to the station, Valérie startled her by suddenly leaning forward.

'Our number is twenty-eight,' she cried; 'don't forget! You promised to come and see us, remember—Twenty-eight! *Au revoir.*'

CHAPTER V.

GIOCOSO.

THE sisters Kostolitz had installed themselves in a small furnished house in Pitt Street. All the houses in Pitt Street are small, but this one seemed to be the tiniest of all. There was scarcely room for two people to stand abreast in the hall, or rather passage, into which the front door opened; and the stairs were so narrow that any but very slender people were obliged to ascend them sideways, walking in crab-like fashion. The oilcloth which covered stairs and passage was very much frayed at the edge and totally destitute of pattern. This oilcloth was Valérie's despair.

'It jumps to the eyes,' she would say; 'no one coming to the

house could fail to notice it, Margot, my dear ; it will need all our fascinations to efface the impression it must produce.'

It was impossible that the little rooms upstairs should not bear some impress of the personalities of their temporary owners : yet the general effect was incongruous and somewhat peculiar. The sisters had a few valuable possessions, evident remains of better days. There were four or five really good pictures, including a half-length portrait of a beautiful woman, easily recognisable as the girls' mother from the likeness to Margot ; there was a magnificent Erard piano, which almost filled the little front drawing-room ; and there was a fine Vernis-Martin writing-table. But the floor was covered with a cheap red matting, and the rest of the furniture was of the poorest and most meagre description. The most comical effect, however, was produced by Valérie's attempts at adornment. Like many artists, she was curiously wanting in what ordinary people would call good taste ; so long as she had colour and variety, she did not care how many incongruous objects she assembled together. Thus she had set her heart upon draping the double doorway which separated their two small reception-rooms with a *portière*.

'I must have a *portière*, Margot,' she said ; 'a blue plush *portière*. This room positively screams for a blue *portière*.'

'And where do you propose to find the money for one ?' asked prudent Margot ; 'a good plush as wide as that would cost nearly ten shillings a yard.'

Valérie was, however, quite sure that a cheaper material could be had ; and after much pondering over advertisements and excursions to different shops, she one day electrified her sister by announcing that she had found the very thing.

'Read this !' she cried, thrusting a newspaper into her hands, 'See here : *Portières complete with solid brass rod and fittings, plushette any shade, 7s. 6d.* What do you say to that ?—7s. 6d. will not ruin us, will it ?'

'They cannot be good at that price,' said Margot. 'Plushette—what is plushette ?'

'Plushette is, without doubt, a sort of plush,' cried Valérie, still joyfully. 'Besides, plushette or plush, what does it signify ? We shall have our blue *portière*, and that is the essential.'

The *portière* was got—by the bye, two *portières* were found to be necessary, as those advertised were only wide enough to fit a very narrow door—and Valérie, mounting upon a table, put them up herself. The plushette was not exceedingly rich in texture, and

somewhat scanty in dimensions—but when you pulled the curtains very hard, they *nearly* joined in the middle; and when you fastened them back with a nice blue cord and tassel, no one could see that they were not lined, or was likely to notice that they did not touch the ground. Valérie was charmed, and the room apparently left off screaming. There were, besides, sundry arrangements in Madras muslin and a collection of glass and china ornaments which were also due to Valérie. Margot's taste was much more simple and severe; but she allowed her sister to do as she liked—it amused her and kept her occupied. She only interfered when Valérie wished to introduce some startling or *bizarre* effect in the adornment of her own small person.

'No, no,' she would then say, firmly, 'this is my department. You may deck the house, but I will deck you.'

After their return from Brackenhurst Valérie displayed a sudden new energy.

'Now,' she said, with a whimsical smile, 'that we have made so many new acquaintances, and may expect so many fashionable people to come and see us, we must be prepared for them. Margot, that wall-paper is hopeless. Nothing can be done to that wall-paper.'

It was, indeed, a particularly ugly specimen of the cheap and dingy design common in houses of the Pitt Street stamp.

'The only thing to be done,' pursued Valérie, 'is to cover it up as much as ever we can. Margot, have we got any money?'

'A little,' said Margot.

'Then come out. We will buy some more Madras muslin, and some little china plates and Japanese fans.'

Margot sighed. More Madras muslin! Nevertheless, if it only kept Valérie from thinking about Sir John, what did it matter with how much rubbish she filled the room? So Valérie dragged her from one shop to another, being invariably charmed with the wonderful effect of the cheap and showy articles in the windows, and somewhat disappointed when admitted to a nearer inspection. She was very busy with scissors and needle for many days afterwards, though, as a matter of fact, she was extremely awkward with both, for her little fingers were clumsy when they attempted to manipulate anything unconnected with her art; then hammer and nails were brought into requisition, and Margot submitted to the noise and bustle and the general transformation of the little room. The only time she felt inclined to protest was when Valérie tied bows of blue ribbon on the hooks which sup-

ported their pictures ; but the sight of the little woman's triumph as she surveyed her handiwork disarmed her.

'*Il me faut du joli,*' said Valérie, walking up and down the room with her hands behind her ; then, suddenly wheeling round, she inquired, 'What will Sir John Croft think of this when he comes to see us ?'

'*Ma mignonne,*' said Margot, very gently, 'do not imagine that he will come to see us. My dear, young men are like that ; they say a thing and they do not mean it. By this time he has probably forgotten our very existence.'

'But I tell you he will come,' cried Valérie, not in the least disconcerted. 'I know him better than you do. He will come and sing, *Do—ré—mi*, &c. You will have your most solemn face on, but he will be looking round all the time to see if I am laughing.'

Weeks passed, however, and Sir John did not come ; but one day an immense hamper of game arrived, with his compliments, for 'Mademoiselle Kostolitz.' Valérie's delight was unbounded. She insisted on opening the hamper there and then, and spreading out its contents on the floor.

'Three, four pheasants,' she cried, 'and two hares ! *Dame !* Sir John does not do things by halves. How does he suppose two little persons like us will get through all that ? They are superb—did you ever see so much game in your life before, Jane ?' she inquired, addressing the little maid-of-all-work, who was looking on open-mouthed.

'Never—except in the shops, miss.'

Valérie laughed and clapped her hands. Then she began to pull out some of the pheasants' long tail feathers. 'Now you can take them all away again ; put them back in the hamper carefully, and don't drop it on your way downstairs.'

Jane retired, groaning and protesting that it was as much as she could do to lift the hamper ; and Valérie skipped back into the drawing-room, and began to stick the feathers upright in her hair.

'Look at me, Margot,' she cried presently, exploding with laughter. 'I am an Indian chief. I am *Plume d'Aigle*, the chief of the Sioux ! *Garde à toi*—I will scalp thee with my tomahawk.'

She rushed towards Margot, brandishing a paper-knife ; but Margot's smile was a little embarrassed.

'It was very kind of Sir John,' she said ; 'I must write and thank him at once.'

The Indian chief laid her tomahawk on the table.

'*Pour ça, non!* It is I who will write to him—he sent the game to me.'

'The hamper was addressed *Mademoiselle Kostolitz*,' said Margot gently. 'I must remind you, *petite impertinente*, that I have been in the world five years longer than you.'

'Not at all,' cried Valérie eagerly, but laughing too; 'it is I who am really *Mademoiselle Kostolitz*—the great *Mademoiselle Kostolitz*, the celebrated violinist, about whom all Europe will one day be raving! The game was sent to me, I tell you—you may help to eat it, but I will thank him for it.'

Margot sat down, looking a little annoyed. Valérie once more seized the paper-knife and danced round her, crying out, 'I will scalp thee—I will scalp thee, if thou art cross.' Then, suddenly thrusting her face close to her sister's, she said pleadingly, 'Do not look so serious, my patriarch—*Bon-papa* Margot.'

What was to be done except to smile and give in?

'You will see what a nice little letter I will send him,' cried Valérie; and triumphantly sitting down to the writing-table, she began the missive forthwith. A mischievous smile played about her lips, and now and then she broke into a laugh.

'Valérie, what are you writing?' cried Margot anxiously.

'I will read it to you when I have finished. Do not be afraid—Sir John will be very much pleased with my letter.'

Presently she called out, '*A la bonheur*, it is done. Now you shall hear it.' Wheeling round on her chair so as to face her sister, she began:

'*Monsieur mon futur*——'

'Valérie, it is not possible that you have written that!'

Margot had sprung up, making a hasty gesture as though she would snatch the paper from her sister's hands.

'No, no,' cried Valérie, jumping up too, and holding the letter out of her reach. 'Do not be afraid. I have put something much more appropriate than that—*Monsieur le Chasseur*.'

Margot threw up her eyes and hands to heaven. 'Worse and worse!' she cried.

'On the contrary, it is very clever of me to think of it. You understand that if this gentleman sends us game, he naturally wishes us to admire his prowess as a sportsman. That is what I mean to convey to him, delicately and without the appearance of flattery. Well, I continue: *My sister and I were both astonished and pleased to receive your handsome present of*

game.—There, that is very *convenable*, is it not?—But, my dear Sir——

‘One does not say *My dear Sir*, in English, among friends or acquaintances,’ put in Margot.

‘Never mind; he will understand that I *think* in French. But now do let me read without interruptions: my dear Sir, you must have made to yourself a curious idea of our appetites. How do you suppose we are going to come to the end of all you have sent us? If you had seen the mountain of game in our hall this morning, with only two such very little people to eat it, you would have laughed, as I did. But we do not, I assure you, complain of your excessive generosity—on the contrary, we mean to regale ourselves well. We shall have banquets of pheasants—we shall feast on hares. I have a plan of my own about those hares: after we have roasted them, and grilled them, and made fricassées of them, and soup of them, we shall make the remainder into little pies. If you knew how I adore *pâté de lièvre*! I shall hardly have patience to go through the first stages—roasting, grilling, &c. I am also looking forward to the day when we shall all make little pies; that is to say, our chef will make them, Margot will superintend, and I will advise.—You see, I speak of our chef—to make him believe *que nous menons grand train ici*. He will not know that Jane is not only chef, but *maître d’hôtel*, *laquais*, *femme de chambre*.’

‘Valérie, is it possible to be so childish?’ cried Margot, with real anger. ‘Sir John Croft knows very well that we are poor—indeed, it is probably for that,’ she added bitterly, ‘that he has sent us this hamper. He thinks that we have not enough to eat.’

‘But what takes you?’ cried Valérie, in astonishment; ‘there you are, as red as a little bantam cock! I assure you, Sir John would never permit himself such impertinent ideas. He sends us this game as a *politesse*, *une amabilité*—a little *souvenir*, *enfin*. *Tiens*, let me finish my letter.’

‘No,’ cried Margot, almost passionately; ‘it is impossible that such a letter could go—I will not allow you to send it.’

‘And why not, if you please?’ inquired Valérie, becoming red in her turn. ‘It is a very pretty letter, very nicely written—Sir John will like it very much.’

‘Sir John would probably laugh at it with all his heart,’ cried Margot; then, suddenly changing her tone, ‘No, no, my dear little sister, I cannot let you send that letter. Do you not see, it is not, to begin with, such a letter as a young girl should write to a

gentleman with whom she is only slightly acquainted? Then, the tone is not becoming—no, really it is not, Valérie. We must not forget our position, and Sir John's.'

'*Ta, ta, ta,*' said Valérie, '*je me moque bien* of Sir John's position. Has he more than sixteen quarterings *par hasard*? And our mother, then?'

'The fact remains, my dear child, that he is a personage, and we are very insignificant. But even independently of this fact, your letter would never do. It is too familiar, too effusive, too *naïve, enfin*. Let me write a little note, Valérie—just a few lines to say we have received the hamper, and to thank him. I assure you, it is all that is needed.'

Valérie moved away from the writing-table. 'You are very disagreeable; I detest you,' she observed briefly. Then she went out of the room, closing the door with a bang. Margot had soon written her note; but it struck her, on reading it over, that it was stiff and ungracious. She tore up the sheet and wrote it over again. Presently Valérie came into the room, and stood beside her sister's chair. Margot glanced round. Valérie was smiling, and replacing the pheasant-feathers in her hair. Margot, delighted to see her good-humour restored, went on with her letter tranquilly.

'Is it finished?' inquired Valérie by-and-by, in deep and tragic tones.

'Yes, at last,' said Margot, looking up. 'O Valérie, what are you doing?'

Valérie had wrapped herself in a table-cloth, draping it over her shoulder after the manner of an Indian's blanket; and now, paper-knife in hand, struck a valiant attitude. When Margot looked at her, she uttered an extraordinary whoop and began to caper about the room.

'It is a war-dance!' she exclaimed, presently halting. 'Plume d'Aigle rejoices because he has conquered the white chief. Yes, my dear, I have no doubt your letter is extremely *convenable* and beautifully written, and you may also post it, if you have a fancy to do so; but my letter has already gone.'

'Gone!' cried Margot in consternation.

'Yes,' cried Valérie, resuming her dance of triumph; 'I put it in the post myself.'

Margot turned white with vexation. She had a temper of her own, though she never showed it to her beloved, if wayward charge; therefore she did not now trust herself to speak. Tearing

up her own note into little bits, she threw them into the waste-paper basket, and, crossing the room, sat down at the piano.

Valérie followed her; but, without appearing to notice her, Margot turned over the music on the piano, and presently, selecting a difficult and rather uninteresting study, began to play.

‘Are you very angry?’ inquired Valérie presently.

‘Is it possible that I can be pleased?’ answered Margot, without turning her head.

Valérie sighed; then, apparently struck by an idea, rushed to the writing-table, whence she presently returned with a penhandle sticking out of her mouth and another in her hand, which she gravely offered to Margot.

‘Plume d’Aigle offers the great white chief the pipe of peace,’ she cried. ‘Do smoke the pipe of peace!’

‘*Ah ça, tu m’ennuies à la fin,*’ said Margot, jumping up impatiently. ‘You have played this game long enough—moreover, I am not in the humour to enjoy it.’

Valérie slowly took the feathers out of her hair and restored the penholders and table-cloth to their proper places; then she sat down in a corner of the room. Margot resumed her playing, but she made mistakes and was abstracted. By-and-by she went across to Valérie and took her in her arms. ‘I cannot be angry with you,’ she said.

Valérie clung to her, her eyes full of tears.

‘No, you must not be angry with your poor little Valérie,’ she said piteously. ‘I feel as though the ground were crumbling beneath my feet when you are angry! Ah, you must always love your child, even when she is naughty.’

‘She is sometimes very naughty, though,’ said Margot tenderly.

‘And you would not let me pretend I was an Indian,’ lamented Valérie. ‘You would not laugh; you would not even smile! But now I must just do one thing more—only one thing more—and then I will never be an Indian again.’

Disengaging herself from her sister’s arms, she ran over to the fireplace and with great ceremony and a very solemn face thrust the shovel under the hearthrug.

‘Child, what are you doing?’ cried Margot.

‘I am burying the hatchet,’ cried Valérie. ‘Now the Indian chief and his great white brother will never quarrel again.’

No further allusion was therefore made to Valérie’s letter until a fortnight or so later, when another hamper arrived from Sir

John. This time it was quite a small one, and, when opened, was found to contain snipe, woodcock, and golden plover. It was accompanied by a little note saying that Sir John Croft hoped Mademoiselle Kostolitz and her sister would find that he had duly considered the smallness of their appetites.

Valérie clapped her hands and jumped about the room. '*Tu vois, tu vois,*' she cried, 'I did well to write that letter! He was not at all angry, but very much amused.'

'I never doubted that he would be amused,' said Margot.

About the middle of November yet another hamper came; this time it contained flowers, every kind of rare hothouse bloom seeming to be there represented.

Valérie's delight knew no bounds; she filled every vase and glass that she possessed, laughing and singing the while.

'The room is like a fairy bower,' she cried. 'I wish somebody nice would call; I wish Sir John would come himself. Is it not strange, Margot, that he does not come to town to begin his singing lessons? He said he would come soon, did he not?'

'He said so,' said Margot, 'but he is probably amusing himself very much somewhere else.'

'Well, I hope he will come soon,' repeated Valérie.

(To be continued.)

‘The Kindest-hearted of the Great.’

IT has been said that the history of England will never be completely known until the annals of the great houses have been compiled, and fitted into the gaps in the plan and the picture. As it is, we are only shown what may be called the full-dress performances, when, as for example in 1688, a noble on the steps of the throne carries the *vox populi* uncomfortably close to the ear of the Lord’s anointed. In the same way, the mere mention of the names—taken at random—of Hobbes, Locke, Prior, Priestley, Crabbe, shows that the tradition of private beneficence was just as consistently and successfully maintained by the privileged order as their other great tradition of public service. And yet here, too, a whole world of those details in which truth hides lies waiting to be recovered from the dust and the dark of muniment and lumber room.

The documents which we propose in what follows to lay before the reader belong, it must be confessed, only to the nineteenth century. There is no question here of rescuing a scribbler from a sponging-house. No longer does the philosopher prompt the peer with *delenda est Carthago*, or reduce the movements of a racehorse to first principles. On the contrary, the tables are turned. Whereas formerly the mummer was as much my lord’s servant as his cook, nowadays mummery has developed into a branch of moral instruction, and the ‘fellow who shows himself for a shilling’ patronises with a kind of amiable benediction the fellow who only pays the shilling at the door.

And yet in one case, at least, patronage survived, but transformed in fact and in name as friendship. ‘The kindest-hearted of the great’ befriended—to name three only out of the whole literary and artistic world of his day—Leigh Hunt, the reformer of the Prince Regent; Dickens, the creator of Sir Leicester Dedlock; and Thackeray, the intrepid satirist, who feared not to carry the holy war against privilege into the very heart of the servants’ hall.

William George Spencer, sixth Duke of Devonshire, son of the fifth Duke and the beautiful Duchess, succeeded his father in 1811. He took no very active share in public life, a circumstance which Greville attributes to his deafness, though it is possible that he may have seen little in the politics of the Greville period to rouse or to reward his ambition. Once, at any rate, he preferred rather to be guided by the great Liberal tradition of his house than to be misled by the strength of his attachment to the engaging person of George IV.; but, on the whole, as a man of taste, the friend of art and letters, he seems, as it were, to break the long Cavendish line of men of affairs. At present we are concerned with him only in so far as his dominant impulse and ambition brought him in contact with the chief literary men and movements of his day.

His intimacy with Dickens began in 1851, when, in aid of the projected 'Guild of Literature and Art,' Lytton's comedy, 'Not so bad as we seem,' was performed before the Queen and the Prince Consort at Devonshire House. As manager, Dickens had to contend with more than the difficulties that are usually involved in the production of private theatricals; and those who remember the skill, care, and delicacy with which Inspector Bucket fulfilled a confidential mission for Sir Leicester Dedlock will not be surprised to find him on duty at Devonshire House.

'Will you kindly let me know which of your people will have charge, on both nights, of the admissions? It is important that Mr. Wills¹ and I should have a little talk with him. I have spoken to Inspector Field of the Detective Police (one of my Night-guides and wholly devoted), and have requested him to attend Mr. Wills on both nights in plain clothes. He is discretion itself, and accustomed to the most delicate missions. Upon the least hint from Mr. Wills, he would show our fair correspondent the wrong way to the theatre, and not say a word until he had her out of hearing—when he would be most polite and considerate.'

A long series of letters passed between Dickens and the Duke, of which the greater number, concerned, as they are, mainly with the discussion and arrangement of practical details, would hardly interest the reader. In the following extract he strikes a favourite note, which his studious admirers may remember to have heard in *Pickwick*.²

¹ Secretary of the Guild.

² This extract and the succeeding letter are published by the kind permission of Miss Hogarth, the owner of the copyright.

'Broadstairs: Sunday, June 1, 1851.

' . . . I am in a favourite house of mine here, perched by itself on the top of a cliff, with the green corn growing all about it and the larks singing invisible all day long. The freshness of the sea and the association of the place (I finished *Copperfield* in this same airy nest) have set me to work with great vigor, and I can hardly believe that I am ever a Manager, and ever go about with a painted face in gaslight.

'When I first had the happiness of seeing you in the room where we have since held so many Councils, you gratified me very much by your affectionate remembrance of *Copperfield*. I am having him put into a decent suit of morocco, and when he comes home in his new dress shall entreat you to give him a place on your shelves for my sake. You see how dangerous it is to give me encouragement!

'When I saw you last I was quite full of the melancholy of having turned a leaf in my life. It was so sad to see the curtain dropped on what you had made so bright and interesting and triumphant, that something of the shadow of the great curtain which falls on everything seemed for a little while to be upon my spirits. I have an indescribable dread of leave-takings; and the taking leave of such a gracious scene made me almost miserable—which I acknowledge here, because it was certainly and undoubtedly your fault.

.
'With the utmost earnestness of my heart,

'CHARLES DICKENS.'

The play was subsequently performed in the provinces for the same object, and Dickens did not forget to inform the Duke from time to time of the events of the tour.

For instance:—

'Jerrold, you will be sorry to hear, has deserted us under circumstances that do not at all improve the act. I have said "deserted *us*," but I ought rather to say has deserted himself. It is no new infirmity of his, however, never to be true to himself. I am mistaken if he does not bitterly repent this false step, long after it is too late.'

Again, writing from Newcastle, he says :—

'I met Lord Carlisle at the Railway station here, yesterday. He is coming to the play to-night, after joining an antiquarian botheration at Alnwick this morning. The archaeologist gentry departed from our hotel magnificently got up for the purpose at 9 o'clock. There were some portentous white cravats among them, and an awful looming of spectacles that appeared to me to threaten a tremendous day.'

Dickens was of course soon invited to Chatsworth. The Duke had compiled for his own pleasure and the use of his friends a gossiping account of the house and its contents, which still exists.¹ That it is not without merit will appear from the impression that it made upon so practised a literary hand as Dickens, even though one may recognise in the tone of the letter a natural desire to say the pleasing thing first and the pointed thing afterwards.

* Broadstairs, Kent : October 10, 1851.

'My dear Duke of Devonshire,—As I travelled from Chesterfield in the railway carriage I read the little book I now return with a pleasure I can scarcely express to you. It was so like going over the house again with you, and hearing you talk about it, that it had a perfect charm for me ; and besides this, I found it in itself so natural and unaffected, so gracefully sensible, and altogether so winning and so good, that I read it through, from the first page to the last, without once laying it aside.

'I could mention some things in it which it would require a very nice art to do as well in fiction. The little suggestive indications of some of the old servants and old rooms—and the childish associations—are perfect little pieces of truth. I know that lingering old smell of the spirit lamp, for instance, so well. The American Hobbs could do nothing so agreeable or a thousandth part so agreeable with any Lock in the world as you have done with that lock wherein the man's hat must be pulled over his eyes. It is quite a spring description, touched in the right place and done with.

'I meant to have told you how much I was moved by the tribute to Paxton—rendered with such a generous and noble earnestness. But I am afraid you would begin to think me a victim to the habit of authorship, and remorselessly inflicting on you a regular review of the book. I must, however, thank you

¹ It is addressed, in the form of a letter, to the Countess Granville.

from my heart for all your kindness and hospitality, and assure you that among your "troops of friends" there cannot be one more obliged to you and attached to you than I am. I feel as if there were a sort of boastfulness in writing as much, even for your eye, but I cannot help it.

'My dear Duke of Devonshire,

'Ever faithfully yours,

'CHARLES DICKENS.

'The Duke of Devonshire.'

The description of the lock is as follows:—

'Observe the most curious of locks on the door to the south-east sitting-room. It was on the door of the den in the north front, and augmented my childish awe and respect for that redoubtable room. Each time the door is unlocked the dial turns round, but it must have revolved one hundred times before the cipher below advances. To bolt the door you pull the man's hat over his eyes; to detect the keyhole you touch the spring under his foot. What a lock!'

Here, to take another example, is a scene in which the opulent outline of the First Gentleman in Europe is touched in with a light hand:—

'Sir Thomas Lawrence's George IV. is the second he painted; the first was a full-length for Lady Conyngham. This one was actually sent to Rome in 1824, to be presented to Cardinal Consalvi. His death occurring, and not long after that of Elizabeth Duchess of Devonshire, who was to have had it, the picture came back to London. The King gave it to me in his usual characteristic manner. "Hart, will you do me a favour?" "What is it, sir?" "I wish you to be on the commission for rebuilding Windsor Castle." Hart respectfully declined, and, being in opposition to H.M.'s Ministers, said he had better not. "Well, Hart, you have refused me that; will you do me another favour? Will you accept my picture by Lawrence?"'

When he comes to the coronation chairs, which are still preserved at Chatsworth, the Duke recalls the occasion on which George III. nerved himself to strike at the too powerful order in the person of its most conspicuous representative.

'The Majesties of William IV. and Adelaide the charitable were crowned in Westminster Abbey in those two chairs. After the ceremony, during which I was Chamberlain, I thought they would,

almost of their own accord, drop into the State Rooms here, because their predecessors, that held George III. and the virtuous Charlotte, had stared me in the face here all the days of my life; and that the "Prince of the Whigs" (so called by the King's mother when he was humbled—qu., honoured?—by being dismissed from Lord Bute's Council) should have permitted the tokens of his servitude to remain here appears to me to have been an exemplary condescension.

'However, the chairs did not arrive spontaneously, and really, had it not been for the cordial advice of the dear old fat Princess Augusta, I should hardly have encountered the difficulties made to prevent my obtaining them. The official underlings actually got the Queen's chair placed in the House of Lords, under the canopy, as if there was no other to be had for the purpose. Nevertheless, here they are, and in my turn I was turned out myself; and you remember well that it was in good company, with Lords Lansdowne, Holland, Melbourne, &c. When pressed to resume my place with them, I had learned by experience my unfitness for it; and that though the indulgence felt by George IV. towards me led him to think me the best of servants, and to ask those who displeased him how they could be so un-Devonshirelike, those qualities might be less apparent to the bluff and unkinglike William. Experience had also taught me no longer to mistake affection for loyalty.'

The mention of Dickens inevitably suggests Thackeray. It would appear that the Duke was no more satisfied than the other readers of *Vanity Fair* when the puppets were finally shut up in the box. The antics of the Becky puppet, at any rate, could not have stopped there, and this is Thackeray's account of the matter:—

' Kensington: May 1, 1848.

'My Lord Duke,—Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, whom I saw last week, and whom I informed of your Grace's desire to have her portrait, was good enough to permit me to copy a little drawing made of her "in happier days," she said with a sigh, by Smee, the Royal Academician.

'Mrs. Crawley now lives in a small but very pretty little house in Belgravia, and is conspicuous for her numerous charities, which always get into the newspapers, and her unaffected piety. Many of the most exalted and spotless of her own sex visit her, and are of opinion that she is a *most injured woman*. There is no *sort of truth* in the stories regarding Mrs. Crawley and the late

Lord Steyne. The licentious character of that nobleman alone gave rise to reports from which, alas! the most spotless life and reputation cannot always defend themselves. The present Sir Rawdon Crawley (who succeeded his late uncle, Sir Pitt, 1832; Sir Pitt died on the passing of the Reform Bill) does not see his mother, and his undutifulness is a cause of the deepest grief to that admirable lady. "If it were not for *higher things*," she says, how could she have borne up against the world's calumny, a wicked husband's cruelty and falseness, and the thanklessness (sharper than a serpent's tooth) of an adored child? But she has been preserved, mercifully preserved, to bear all these griefs, and awaits her reward *elsewhere*. The italics are Mrs. Crawley's own.

'She took the style and title of Lady Crawley for some time after Sir Pitt's death in 1832; but it turned out that Colonel Crawley, Governor of Coventry Island, had died of fever three months before his brother, whereupon Mrs. Rawdon was obliged to lay down the title which she had prematurely assumed.

'The late Jos. Sedley, Esq., of the Bengal Civil Service, left her two lakhs of rupees, on the interest of which the widow lives in the practices of piety and benevolence before mentioned. She has lost what little good looks she once possessed, and wears false hair and teeth (the latter give her rather a ghastly look when she smiles), and—for a pious woman—is the best-crinolined lady in Knightsbridge district.

'Colonel and Mrs. W. Dobbin live in Hampshire, near Sir R. Crawley; Lady Jane was godmother to their little girl, and the ladies are exceedingly attached to each other. The Colonel's *History of the Punjab* is looked for with much anxiety in some circles.

'Captain and Lt.-Colonel G. Sedley-Osborne (he wishes, he says, to be distinguished from some other branches of the Osborne family, and is descended by the mother's side from Sir Charles Sedley) is, I need not say, well, for I saw him in a most richly embroidered cambric pink shirt with diamond studs, bowing to your Grace at the last party at Devonshire House. He is in Parliament; but the property left him by his Grandfather has, I hear, been a good deal overrated.

'He was very sweet upon Miss Crawley, Sir Pitt's daughter, who married her cousin, the present Baronet, and a good deal cut up when he was refused. He is not, however, a man to be permanently cast down by sentimental disappointments. His

chief cause of annoyance at the present moment is that he is growing bald, but his whiskers are still without a grey hair and the finest in London.

'I think these are the latest particulars relating to a number of persons about whom your Grace was good enough to express some interest. I am very glad to be enabled to give this information, and am

'Your Grace's very much obliged servant,

'W. M. THACKERAY.

'P.S.—Lady O'Dowd is at O'Dowdstown arming. She has just sent in a letter of adhesion to the Lord-Lieutenant, which has been acknowledged by his Excellency's private secretary, Mr. Corry Connellan. Miss Glorvina O'Dowd is thinking of coming up to the Castle to marry the last-named gentleman.

'P.S. 2.—The India mail just arrived announces the utter ruin of the Union Bank of Calcutta, in which all Mrs. Crawley's money was. Will Fate never cease to persecute that suffering saint?'¹

Leigh Hunt's letters transport us into a very different atmosphere. The cause of Reform was a serious business at the time when he had the misfortune to endeavour to promote it. It had not yet become everybody's amusement, from the pedlar to the priest. Nothing worse befell Dickens, even after his terrific onslaught upon the Circumlocution Office, than that Sir James Stephen called him—anonously—a buffoon. The bark of the Barnacles was worse than their bite. While as for his great contemporary, in whom Charlotte Brontë hailed a prophet mighty to save society from 'a bloody Ramoth Gilead'—whatever that may mean—perhaps even he may have come to suspect that, after all, the man about town had chosen the better part.² In short, the difference is instructive between the two fortunate and fashionable satirists and the broken-down invalid who went to prison for two years for having ventured to criticise the public deportment of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, for the latter's good.

¹ By permission of the Duke of Devonshire, this letter will be reprinted in Messrs. Smith & Elder's forthcoming new edition of *Vanity Fair*.

² Dick Doyle speaks in a slow, rather drawling tone, but always admirably *ad rem*. Of Thackeray he said that he could not get over the impression that he despised the finest of his own creations. He looked down even on Colonel Newcome because he was not a man about town' ('The House of Commons Half a Century Ago,' II., by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, *Contemporary Review*, September, 1897, p. 447).

The letters are, as a whole, monotonous. The occasion and the theme repeat themselves, though the expression varies under the touch of an unrivalled master of the difficult art of complaint and solicitation. It seems to have been impossible either to provoke or to fatigue the Duke, in whom Leigh Hunt sought a patron and found a friend. Occasionally an interesting episode breaks in, as, for example, when he criticises Dickens both as a man and as an actor, or excuses himself to the discoverer of Paxton for not having gone to see the Great Exhibition.

During the years 1852 and 1853 *Bleak House* was published. Left to himself, Leigh Hunt would probably never have guessed that he had anything in common with Harold Skimpole—no man is to himself what his neighbour sees him to be; but he was warned of the writer's intention by the kindly forethought of a friend. In the complaint which he pours, as usual, into the ever-willing ear of his benefactor there is no mention of Dickens; but it is easy to see whom and what he means. It would seem that Dickens, when challenged, made only a qualified admission of the impeachment. He had loaded his brush with nature's own tints, it is true; but therewith he had painted only half a portrait. To poor Leigh Hunt, however, *πλέον ἤμισυ παντός*. Nevertheless, there was some consolation to be derived from the fact that the press, owing probably more to its dulness than to its decency, had so far kept silence, with the exception of two voices; in one of which Leigh Hunt recognised the bigotry of Scotland, and in the other the vulgarity of America.

Lastly, it may be worth noting that Leigh Hunt had some thoughts of retiring to a cottage near one of the Duke of Devonshire's country seats, and of devoting the evening of life to the task of writing the history of the Cavendish family.

The annals are still to be written, and as for himself,

'Forsitan illius nomen miscebitur istis.'

S. ARTHUR STRONG.

The Fetch: a Ballad.

‘**W**HAT makes you so late at the tryst,
 What caused you so long to be?
 I have waited a weary time
 From the hour you promised me.’

‘*Oh, glad were I here by your side,
 Full many an hour ago,
 But for what there passed on the road
 All so mournfully and so slow.*

‘And what have you met on the road
 That kept you so long and so late?’
 ‘*O full many an hour has gone
 Since I left my father’s gate.*

‘*As I hastened on in the gloom,
 By the road to you to-night,
 I passed the corpse of a young maid
 All clad in a shroud of white.*

‘And was she some friend once cherished,
 Or was she a sister dead,
 That you left your own true lover
 Till the trysting hour had sped?’

‘*I could not see who it might be,
 Her face was hidden away,
 But I had to turn and follow
 Wherever her resting lay.*

'And did it go up by the town,
Or went it down by the lake?
I know there are but two churchyards
Where a corpse its rest may take.'

*'They did not go by the town,
Nor by the lake stayed their feet,
But buried the corpse all silently
Where the four cross roads do meet.'*

'And was it so strange a sight
That you should go like a child
Thus to leave me to wait, forgotten,
By a passing sight beguiled?'

*'Oh, I heard them whisper my name,
Each mourner that passed by me;
And I had to follow their path,
Though their faces I could not see.'*

'And right well I would like to know
Who this fair young maid might be,
So take my hand, my own true love,
And hasten along with me.'

He did not go down by the lake,
He did not go by the town,
But carried her to the four cross roads,
And there he did set her down.

'Now I see no track of a foot,
I see no mark of a spade,
And I know well in this white road
That never a grave was made.'

He took her hand in his right hand,
'And led her to town away,
And there he questioned the old priest,
Did he bury a maid that day.

He took her hand in his right hand,
Down to the church by the lake,
And there he questioned the young priest,
If a maiden her life did take.

THE FETCH: A BALLAD.

But there was no tale of a death
In all the parish round,
And neither had heard of a maid
Thus put in unholy ground.

He loosed her hand from his hand,
And turned on his heel away.
'I know now you are false,' he said,
'From the lie you told to-day.'

And she said, 'Oh, what evil things
Did to-night my senses take?'
She knelt down by the water-side
And wept as her heart would break.

And she said, 'Oh, what fairy sight
Was it thus my grief to see!
I'll sleep well 'neath the still water,
Since my love has turned from me.'

.
And her love he went to the north,
And far to the south went he,
But still he heard her distant voice
Call, weeping so bitterly.

He could not rest in the daytime,
He could not sleep in the night,
He hastened back to the old road,
With the trysting-place in sight.

What first he heard was his love's name,
And keening both loud and long;
What first he saw was his love's face
At the head of a mourning throng.

And white she was as the dead are,
And never a move made she,
But passed him by on her black pall,
Still sleeping so peacefully.

And cold she was as the dead are,
And never a word she spake,
When they said, 'Unholy is her grave
Since she her life did take.'

Silent she was as the dead are,
And never a cry she made
When there came, more sad than the keening,
The ring of a digging spade.

No rest they gave in the town church,
No grave by the lake so sweet,
But buried her in unholy ground,
Where the four cross roads do meet.

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER.

A Finn Poacher.

A PARTY of us had been telling 'escape stories,' some of which were very tall indeed; but when it came to Stephen's turn to tell his yarn, Stephen declared he had never had any kind of escape from a wild animal, unless we liked to include a parrot he once possessed, which on a certain occasion swore so abominably in the presence of an old aunt from whom Stephen had expectations, that he narrowly escaped being cut off with a shilling, and that only by wilfully misquoting the parrot's remarks, thereby appeasing the old lady, who, fortunately, had not quite caught the words at first hand.

But it was decided that a parrot is not a wild animal, and besides, that Stephen's experience could hardly be called an escape from bodily peril.

'You will have to think of something else, Stephen,' said the chairman, 'or pay the fine!'

Stephen remained silent, thinking. Some one threw a fir-cone at him. It hit the side of his head, but Stephen pondered on.

'Well,' he said at last, 'I had a bit of an adventure—in a way—with a poacher one night; would that do?'

It was decided unanimously that this would do very well, and Stephen began.

'I was spending a week in spring up at Ostramanch,' he said; 'and Simon the keeper said he had been worried a goodish bit lately by a poacher, a Finnish rascal called Miki, whom he could never catch, but who bagged his brace of blackcock or capercaillie every night regularly. If only he had an assistant worthy the name, said Simon, he would soon have the fellow; but Lakoo and Solomon were both afraid of Miki, for he was a murderous rascal, and would not tackle him.

'Well, I offered to do my best, and in the end Simon and I started together one night as though bound for the capercaillie

Tok, or spring tournament; but we separated, he going to the capercailzie ground and I to the place where the blackgame held their jousts. We hoped in this way to delude Miki, who would be sure to watch us, and who, if he saw us heading together for one place, would straightway steer for the other.

‘So Simon went to the capercailzie forest, and I turned aside to find the *shalashka*, or conical hut made of fir-boughs, which Simon had prepared in the midst of the open space used by the blackcock for their curious and most interesting spring tournaments.

‘It was well after midnight when I groped my way to the hut and got inside it, closing the entrance with a spare fir-bough which had been placed close by ready for the purpose. It was so dark that I had some difficulty in finding the spot; but I did find it at last, and, as I say, took up my abode inside the hut, there to await either blackgame or poacher as the case might be.

‘I made myself as comfortable as I could in the confined space, and fell half asleep, which was foolish, I admit, but it is not the easiest thing in the world to keep awake in absolute utter silence and darkness, and at a time when one is every night of one’s life fast asleep in bed; but I woke with a start in—as I judged—about an hour. It was now approaching two o’clock, a time when the blackcock may reasonably be expected to make their appearance before long, and as full consciousness returned I became aware of human footsteps coming towards the open through the forest beyond. There was no road through the wood, and I knew at once that this could not very well be any person taking his walks abroad at dead of night for the good of his health or in pursuit of amusement, for in that neighbourhood exercise and distraction never take this particular form. The wanderer could be but one thing, and that was a poacher. Now, as there existed no poacher for miles around except our friend Miki, to whom I alluded just now as being a dangerous customer to deal with, conjecture as to the most probable proprietor of the feet whose approaching steps I had noticed was narrowed down to a practical certainty: it could be none but Miki. The position was a little awkward, for though I would risk a good deal to make a capture of this gentleman red-handed, yet I am quite as anxious to preserve my skin unriddled by poacher’s shot as any other plain man. The question to be decided, and to be decided quickly, was, how best should I accomplish my end and yet retain my skin in its normal condition? The thing must be settled without delay, for

the footsteps had already nearly reached the patch of open ground which separated me from the border of the forest, and though it was pitch dark and he could not under any circumstances see what I was up to, whether I stayed or shifted from my post, yet if I decided to move he might easily hear me. Should I remain and trust all to a tussle inside the *shalashka*? In that case, even though I should get the better of the fellow, thanks to the shock which my unexpected presence would cause him, by obtaining an advantage which might make up for his superior size and strength, for he was a perfect giant of a man, still I should not have caught him red-handed, as I desired to do; while if I concealed myself in the wood behind and allowed him to shoot a blackcock before pouncing out upon him, he would have plenty of time either to make a bolt for it and get clear away before I could reach his *shalashka*, or to take a deliberate shot at me as I approached to capture him. There was a third alternative, and this I determined to adopt—namely, to get out of the *shalashka* and hide behind a low bush some few yards away. He would not see me in the dark, and as soon as he had shot at a blackcock I could safely pounce out upon him and grab him before he should have found time to reload his old single-barrel, which I knew well was all he possessed in the way of firearms.

‘No sooner did I think of this last plan than I recognised it as the best. I quickly seized my gun, and, pushing aside a sufficient number of the pine branches which constituted the sides of the *shalashka* to enable me to squeeze my body through, left the hut at the end farthest away from the point whence the footsteps were advancing, taking care to patch the *shalashka* from outside ere I finally left it. Then I groped about in the intense darkness for some low scrub behind which I might lie hid, moving over the frozen ground as noiselessly as possible. I soon found the very bush I sought, one sufficiently high to conceal my recumbent form even though the light should grow strong enough to render things dimly visible at a distance of ten or fifteen yards, for the bush was no further than this from the *shalashka*. I lay down with my gun beside me and waited. The footsteps were already crossing the open, coming straight for the *shalashka*, and could not now be more than fifty yards away; I had not taken my departure a moment too soon!

‘On came friend Miki, for of course it was he, and a minute or two later I heard him reach the *shalashka*, put aside the boughs, and clamber in; then I saw him strike a match and light his

pipe—the lucky rascal! how I wished I could follow his example!—and puff away contentedly; rather a risky thing to do, by the way, at a time of the night when the blackcock may be expected at any moment; for those birds are wont to look with suspicion upon the little red eye of a lighted pipe, and to keep away until the smoke is over. I soon found out one fact, and that was that I should be horribly cold out here; it was much warmer in the *shalashka*; here again Miki was at an advantage over me. I could only hope and pray that it would please the blackcock knights to commence their tournament as quickly as possible and allow me to carry out my little plan before I should be frozen too stiff to move a finger when the opportunity came. And now a rather disquieting thought came worrying around in my brain: what if no blackcock turned up before it grew light? for if this rascal were to catch sight of me lurking here, with the charge still in his gun, it would be the work of a moment to “pot” me as I lay, and it was quite probable that Miki would consider the opportunity too good to be missed! This was by no means a pleasant reflection, and added no warmth to my already chilled blood.

‘In this way half an hour passed, during which I went through agonies of cold; the only movement I dared make was a cautious rubbing of one leg or one hand against its fellow, which was not sufficient to restore or promote the circulation in those members. At last, however, at the end of the half-hour, one of the very longest I have ever passed, I heard to my joy the beating of two strong wings, followed by the thud on the ground, some hundred yards or so from me, which indicated the arrival of the first blackcock—known as the “king of the tok.” When this great chief arrives his coming is the signal that operations may commence so soon as he shall have given the first challenge. I awaited his fiat therefore with the greatest impatience, for I was in sore need of some excitement to warm my blood. Presently the king began—you—most of you—know the challenge, the abrupt “chuwish! chuwish!” and then that loud croon, like that of a giant dove.

‘Instantly the air became alive with the whirr of flying wings coming from the forest at every point of the compass. The blackcock had but awaited this signal from their chief, and were coming up to respond to it in scores. Each bird settled and commenced immediately to give out its challenges to the world of blackcock in general and to its nearest neighbour in particular. The atmosphere vibrated with their crooning to an extent which was almost painful to the ear, though the constant calls of “chuwish!

chuwish!" lent a saving and pleasant variety to the monotonous din. One thing, however, was abundantly clear to me, and that was that Simon, the keeper, had placed the *shalashka* in the wrong spot. All the blackcock arrived up to now were well out of range of a gun located where friend Miki reclined at ease at this moment. This fact did not strike me so very forcibly for some few minutes while I listened, in the excitement of the arrival of the birds, to their first challenges; there is something most deliciously exciting about that sublime moment when the great heavy birds come swooping down in the blackness of the night and settle so close to one; it always excites me and always will to my dying day. But when my fervour cooled down and I reflected that it would be very awkward for me if no birds came within shot to draw Miki's charge, inasmuch as in that case my own person would as likely as not be the ultimate receptacle for the said charge, I began to feel that the situation was becoming increasingly awkward. So far as I could judge from the apparent distance of the birds, as measured by the ear alone, for it was far too dark to see anything as yet, there was not one within shot or anything like it. There might, of course, be others nearer which had not as yet issued their challenges, or new arrivals might still turn up to save my skin at the expense of their own; but it was high time they came if they were coming at all. So I waited on, in trepidation and suspense, chilled to the marrow and very miserable all round. Meanwhile the blackcock kept up their sham-fights, crowing and hectoring at one another and making a terrible din of beating wings and scuttling feet, pretending to half murder each other, as is their way, but seldom coming within dangerous distance of the adversary's claws and spurs. They occasionally chased their rivals over the field of battle, often passing close to my head in their rapid flight from one point to another. This circumstance raised a hope in my breast. Possibly, I thought, one of the pursuers or the pursued might settle close to the *shalashka* and thus give Miki the opportunity which both he and I, for very different reasons, so ardently desired. Almost as this thought crossed my mind a great beating of powerful wings came towards me, approached nearer and nearer, and then—just as I expected the bird to pass over the place where I lay and listened—it swooped and settled within a foot or two of my very nose, upon the small bush behind which I cowered. The opponent settled also, but on the ground, a yard or two further on, having actually touched my body with its feet as it passed. Whether the contact

with my person alarmed it or whether it had other reasons best known to itself, I cannot say, but the bird immediately rose again and continued its flight, leaving its rival to think what it pleased of the circumstance. I have no idea as to what the latter champion may have thought of the other's conduct, but it seemed to me to take a doleful view of things in general, for it discontinued all participation, for a while, in the proceedings of its peers. Perhaps it saw me and was engaged in wondering what in the world I could be, and whether I could by any chance be a stray human or was merely a root or a log of wood. Perhaps it was buried in surmise as to the probable reason for the flight of its rival, conscious that, personally, it had done nothing particularly brave or violent, such as might terrify a nervous adversary. Possibly, again, it may have been suffering from the gloomy presentiment of approaching disaster; at any rate, it preserved a strict silence and took no part in the heroics going on around it.

'As for me, I lay low. There was nothing else to be done, for I dared not move. I could have stretched a hand and pulled that blackcock from its perch, had I been so minded; but I was far from desiring to do so. On the contrary I already looked upon this bird as specially provided by a kind providence in order to preserve me from a serious danger. Though the blackcock was but a couple of feet from my nose, I could not as yet distinguish him; he might have been a crow for all I could make out of his personal appearance. He had his back turned to me—that much I could be sure of by the glint of white which I took to be the snowy feathers under his tail.

'Suddenly he gave a great "chuwish," which came so unexpectedly that I started violently and very nearly gave myself away. Thank goodness! he intended to stay here then, and if only I could keep so still that he should have no suspicion of me until Miki could see well enough to shoot, I was safe. Even now the sky in the far east had begun to assume that spectral colour which heralds brighter things to come. Somewhere in the distance a flock of cranes had set up their day's din factory, and were busy shrieking at the very top of their voices. The willow grouse, too, were laughing away to their hearts' content in their delightfully cordial spring style. There was one of them scuttling about, chasing his mate and playing with her, quite close to me. I could even see them now and again as they scudded past me, for they were still white, or nearly so. The frogs were very noisy; they did not seem to find the frost discouraging. Probably they knew

that it was going to thaw next day, and lived upon the pleasures of anticipation.

‘But now it was most undoubtedly growing lighter every moment. I could picture old Miki inside there staring at my blackcock neighbour till his eyes watered, and longing for the light to strengthen sufficiently to render an aim possible. I had so often been in the same position myself that I knew his exact sensations, and quite envied him the excitement which he must have been enjoying. I pictured him in my mind’s eye as pointing that old muzzle-stuffer of his, and looking along the barrel towards the quarry, trying his utmost to satisfy himself that he might reasonably risk a shot.

‘But then all of a sudden a truly awful thought struck me. Here was I longing for the fellow to shoot, and yet I was in the exact line of his fire, fool that I was! He was just as likely to kill me as the blackcock, for I was but a couple of feet below the level of the bird, and in this uncertain light he might so easily shoot too low. Good heavens! what was I to do? Stretch out a hand and pull the blackcock off its perch and suffocate it? But he might think it had hopped down and was strutting about behind the bush. In that case he would fire through the bush on spec!

How would it be to crawl cautiously away under shelter of the scrub? It was getting too light to risk that. What on earth was to be done?

‘How I should have decided to act I do not know, for I was never called upon to come to a decision. Just at this crisis I heard with awful suddenness a deafening report, while at the same moment two things happened—the blackcock fell dead upon my neck, and I felt a sharp stinging puncture in the calf of my leg. Miki had aimed well, as, to do him justice, he generally did.

‘Needless to say, I was upon my feet in a moment, and bounding towards the *shalashka* to the astonishment and, as I have reason to believe, the disgust of the startled Mr. Miki.

‘“Throw down your gun and hatchet or you are a dead man!” I cried, and Miki, like a wise man, did both.

‘“Now, then,” I said, covering him with my gun as I spoke, “leave those things there and get out of the *shalashka*. You are caught this time, Miki, and you may say good-bye to that old muzzle-stuffer of yours, for you shall never see it again.”

‘Miki came out of the *shalashka* and faced me; then he lifted up his voice and treated me to a string of the choicest bad words that the tongue of man ever uttered. All the blackcock

flew away quite shocked. After which he very rudely spat at me; then he turned his back upon me and departed.

'This was practically the end of Miki as a sportsman, for I broke his gun in pieces, and he never succeeded in begging or stealing another. And there ends my one and only escape, if escape you like to call it,' concluded Stephen, relighting his pipe; 'and if it isn't as exciting as some of the yarns you fellows have spun—why, it's true, anyway, and that's more than one or two of you can say.'

Stephen's remark involved him in a declaration of war with no less than three of his neighbours, each of whom—presumably by reason of a guilty conscience—imagined himself referred to in his concluding remarks. Stephen survived, however, but only at the expense of an experience which provided him on the spot, as some one observed, with a new and true yarn of a danger escaped and a life saved by running away.

FRED WHISHAW.

Preparatory School Assistant Masters.

IN these latter days, when the words 'secondary education' start to the lips as glibly as may be, when Mr. Arthur Sidgwick at Oxford and Canon Lyttelton at Haileybury are by-words, it seemed to me possible that an article bearing on a side issue—to how many of us the main issue!—of the matter might be not altogether out of place. I say a side issue, for one legislates for the many: Canon Lyttelton slides a bill on to the Speaker's table, Mr. Sidgwick takes the sense of Convocation, and each with a biggish scheme to work at, but each with a scheme which indirectly or directly must affect the future of the subject of my essay.

The term 'schoolmaster' is a wide one. It embraces the head masters of our large public schools: these—I do not know that it is a higher rung of the ladder—are to be bishops and heads of colleges. It embraces the public school assistants: we recruit the ranks of head masters from these, and in any case there is money to be made out of a House. It includes another big class—the head masters of preparatory schools: that is a money-making business too, if you can get into the swing of it. All do not, I know, for I have seen; but there is money in it for all that. I am mainly concerned with University men, or I might speak of others who can claim the title of schoolmaster. If I were to set out to classify the lot! But it is as wide a name as an engineer's; and that engineer of yours, perhaps, cuts you an isthmus, and mine pokes at drains.

These head masters, and the public school assistant masters, I propose to exclude from discussion for this reason, that I do not know whether there is anything particular to be said about them—not, at least, with regard to the purposes of the present article. They are settled in life; they have definite prospects (I must speak generally); their bank-books are passable, or may be so; I am done with them.

But take the preparatory schools, and limit your examination to the prospects of the assistant masters employed. Here is matter for thought—matter commented on only, perhaps, by the few: I would wish, if it were possible, that a broader light might be thrown upon it. For the issues involved I believe to be as bright and as saddening as can be in any walk of life on this earth. And I think I am not missing my object when I say that I wish to give utterance to a warning.

The warning amounts to a caution against entering the teaching profession. But before I give my reasons, it may be right to draw attention to a few facts which will serve as introductory.

The laws of supply and demand justify themselves in scholastic matters no less than in any others. Now in the later history of English education there is noticeable an increasing demand for public schools. Easily enough seen, that; for you can count the old public schools (I was going to put it) on your fingers—the larger schools, I am understood to say, and not fine old institutions such as the King's School, Canterbury, which are essentially small in regard to numbers, though with an origin more than mediæval. Here are some dates. Winchester, Eton, and the City of London School were founded before 1450; St. Paul's comes next, founded in 1509; but the latter half of the sixteenth century—here is a collection! The dates run from 1551 to 1584, and in order come Shrewsbury, Bedford, Christ's Hospital, Tonbridge, Repton, Westminster, Merchant Taylors', Rugby, Harrow, and Uppingham. Charterhouse was founded in 1611, Dulwich in 1619, and then there is a gap. In fact, not until 1841—two hundred and twenty years' interval—does another English public school make its appearance. But then—not single spies! Cheltenham, 1841; Marlborough, 1843; Rossall, 1844; Wellington, 1857; Clifton, 1862; Malvern, 1863, Haileybury, 1866: not to speak of the Scotch schools, Edinburgh Academy, Fettes, Glenalmond, and Loretto, all of which were founded during the present century.

Dates are dull matter, unless disputable; but here they serve a purpose, which is to explain another fact—the increase of late in the number of preparatory schools. For we are no longer of the same mind as our parents, who sent their children straight to a public school from the nursery. Rather we consider that the child's life, from the age when he fumbles with block letters, should be a continuous and graduated training for more advanced education to follow. Keate, for instance, took boys at Eton.

when they were seven: I suppose the majority of newcomers under Dr. Warre are six years older than that. Nor is the preparatory school the only step in prospect: some institutions are preparatory even for this; or you find, perhaps, junior schools tacked on to the skirts of preparatory schools, with a modified set of rules, and possibly more frequent opportunities of home life and surroundings. I am not to discuss the advantages of this system, nor to speak of the boys themselves, but, *certes*, we make a fuss about them!

It follows that with a largely augmented number of embryo pupils the number of necessary tutors also must be greater. As a matter of fact, there are no statistics to be seen which give even an approximate figure: though I observe that the Educational Department of the Government has issued a circular asking for information—in fact, is attempting a kind of census. At all events, excluding the schools I have mentioned above, Whitaker gives more than four hundred provincial colleges and grammar schools—the majority, doubtless, unimportant, but still Radley, Bradfield, Lancing, and Felsted are among them. And to enumerate the institutions preparatory only for the ‘Great Public Schools,’ as they are commonly styled, would mean some big figures.

If the matter be viewed generally, however, and with small regard to tens and twenties, it will be seen that the number of preparatory schools at the present time is very large indeed—far larger than it was in the forties—and likely to increase for all that I can see. That brings an inquirer to this question: there is a big demand for tutors to man these preparatory schools—how is the demand met?

Of course, there are very many different reasons which lead a parent to send his son to the University. The main reason, perhaps, is that a University career is held to be the best possible finish to a modern education. Some send their sons to college because they were sent themselves, and for no other reason—the thing is a tradition; others, that they may learn something of ‘the world,’ before wearing out the office stool; and others with dim ideas—how often disappointed!—of the Church as a profession.

It would be at least partly irrelevant to the present question to inquire in what ways the University actually benefits a young man. This much may be said: that if he seeks honours he is three or four years older when he has taken his degree than when he left school, and that is something, after all. But the

numbers of those who matriculate at Oxford and Cambridge with the fixed purpose of adopting a scholastic profession, and none other, are very small indeed, I am sure. Obviously, few boys of eighteen have a cut-and-dried future before them; and the question 'What are you going to do when you go down?' is, I dare say, almost the commonest asked in May week and Commemoration. Diplomacy, the Bar, literature (vaguest of all!), I can hear the answer; yet how vague the vista may be none but those who have been asked that question can know.

There are some, doubtless, whose steadiest idea throughout their three or four years at the University has been the career of a schoolmaster. The influence of these is a considerable quantity, and possibly it accounts for not a few of the recruits of this profession. But, broadly to state the case, I should maintain that nowadays it is not a fixed idea, not influence, not inclination which makes most men schoolmasters; it is the force of circumstances.

In fact, a man becomes a schoolmaster because there is nothing else for him to do. For consider the professions open to a graduate—even in high honours—of twenty-three or twenty-four. I am speaking, of course, of men who have not the means necessary to the opening stages of such a profession as that of a barrister or a solicitor: indeed, I am mainly to do with penniless people, or at least those who through their own or their parents' efforts have compassed the statutory terms of residence, and at the end of three or four years find themselves with little more than a degree and a sheaf of bills to show for them. There are not so many fellowships as will provide for a dozen of these per annum, even granted the brains to take them; there are the Home and the Indian Civil Services to be sure, but these need special reading, and as often as not preliminary coaching at a crammer's. Besides, the uncertainty of them! You are likely to find yourself worse off after the examination than before it. And the Bar, or a solicitor's office, or the army, or the hospitals—all these need capital, as I have said before.

But there are two professions which ask for no banker's reference. Wide is the gate, and easy the way: they are the professions of clergymen and schoolmasters (combine them should you please). Those would be interesting statistics which should tabulate the number of men willy-nilly forced into a curacy or a master's lodgings. I want to mention a few inducements to enter the latter.

Take a typical case. The boy gained a scholarship at his public school; perhaps he played cricket and football, was even a member of the eleven. Later, he took a scholarship at Oxford or Cambridge, and assisted perhaps by help from a school exhibition, perhaps by ill-spared money from home, came out at the end of three or four years with a moderate—maybe good—degree, and a college cap for whatever game he played; college colours are not hard to get, after all.

Or look at another man's record. He was sent to college by a father who considered that enough to do for him: thenceforward he was to make his own way; at least he had had his chance, and so forth. He took a pass degree (or did not), ran up a bill or two, and in July found himself with this and that to pay, and who knows how to pay it? He may owe nothing, for that matter, but—nobody owes him anything, at all events.

I should consider these two cases in the main as typical—typical, at least, of the position of the class of men whose life history is the subject of this essay. I have not included the type of man who has made his goal the possession of a school of his own, because such a man has weighed his chances, has sat down to count the cost: here and there he may be mistaken, but generally speaking he will be successful, and as soon as he is that he becomes from the present standpoint inconsiderable. No, the men on whose careers I would wish to throw such a searchlight as this may be are those who are compelled to adopt a profession for which they have not knowingly an aptitude, or even perhaps an inclination; who become schoolmasters because they must have food and money. That, you will say, is the single object of most of us, to be able to eat and sleep; but that a schoolmaster's life may be the unsafest means to that end I shall attempt to show.

Granted that the class-lists appear in July, a week will not have passed before the graduate will receive by post communications from a school agency. His name, it is flatteringly suggested, has been noticed in the class-lists; should he wish to enter the teaching profession, the best efforts of the agents are at his service, and a budget of testimonials is enclosed with the familiar flimsy type-written letter (this is signed in real ink by the head of the firm), testimonials from bishops, peers, and schoolmasters of every grade and description. *Apropos* of these agents, any one who has had anything to do with them will know that there are firms and firms: some undeniably of good reputation, who may be depended upon to do their best for their clients; others—but I remember

one in particular, who lied to me right and left, taking a fee for it, and I am not alone in such an experience as that, I suppose.

Your fledged graduate—perhaps his scout has hardly pocketed his sovereign for taking off the gown—reads these papers. Their contents simmer slowly; possibly he mentions the matter to his father, and his father as a rule has fixed notions with regard to idle young men; perhaps a pressing half-sheet from a tradesman settles it all—I have known such a thing. But this I say, that some such combination of circumstances as I have described is the genesis of the majority of latter-day assistant schoolmasters. The man must have food, he must have lodging, he must have money. A schoolmaster earns all three.

And so—an interview with the agents. Is it generally known that this is the only possible method of entering the profession? A dingy little ante-room; stacks of envelopes, lettered and numbered; a clerk or two, and a tube communicating with the chief's sanctum: there is your agency. You walk in without knocking, are waved to a chair, take your turn with the other men sitting there; presently a mysterious beckoning, and you enter that inner room. There he sits, the man through whose hands pass I do not know how many appointments per week, and he takes stock of you. Your name, age, school, college; the subjects you propose to teach, your religious views, your athletic qualifications, your previous experience, if any—you must tell him all this, and he jots it on a card; if you have a photograph (I had not) give it to him; give him also half a crown, to cover postal expenses, and he has no doubt he can find you a position eminently suited to your requirements.

Within the week he sends you notifications of vacant appointments. These are marked *Private and Confidential*, and consist of type-written descriptions of what posts you may try for. I need not reproduce a specimen—indeed, judging from the cautions as to secrecy which form a preface, I doubt whether I should not be consigned to a dungeon if I did. But in larger type than the rest of these precious documents is printed the salary: I dare say the average amount offered is £80 or £90 a year, *plus* board and residence—but then some men would consider that a first-class post. I have never seen a larger salary than £200 offered (there were bigwigs tried for that, you may be sure), but I have seen many of £40, and I observe in a recent list of tutors seeking employment, forwarded me by an agent who 'makes no doubt I am a client,' that one Englishman is willing to accept a stipend of

£10 a year for his services. The pity of it!—but I would rather be a sweep's boy at a shilling a week. I might rise to be a master sweep.

Still, I do not wish to pick out for lamentation exceptions of such a kind as this. I want to speak of the average man who can command a salary of £100, with board and residence. Of course, that is not £100 for the first year, for you pay the agent five per cent.; should you be unfortunate, it is quite possible that you may pay these gentry £15 out of your first year's salary, if so be that you change the pitch three times, which has happened before now. But no more of that; let us suppose the man settled in a likely school at a 'commencing salary' of the round hundred.

He has a very great deal to learn, far more than he thinks. He is perhaps a fair scholar, with some notions as to decent Latin verse-making, and a hint or two for him who would write Greek prose; he can string you an imitation of Tacitus, can knock off an easy iambic, pick holes in silver Latin: mind, such a master as this is, if anything, above the average. But can he teach?

It is not an easy matter to teach small boys. That Craven scholar of yours, or my prose tutor at Balliol, has not, I would wager, a notion of it. He may turn me a convenient *οὐ μὲν ἄλλα*, piece me a pretty pentameter, expatiate quaintly on *Phælus ille* and the iniquities of Arrius; but could he teach *sums* to a boy of ten? That is another thing.

It takes years to learn it all; that is, to learn how to present the elements of Latin and Greek and French and mathematics to the mind of a child, in such a form that he can readily assimilate them—to know how ignorant he himself is. It is the schoolmaster's first duty; and he cannot learn it in a fortnight. No, he may go on teaching for twenty years, and at the end he is as Socrates in this—he knows that he knows nothing.

What has the man achieved at the end of a dozen years of teaching? Not, I mean, how has he bettered others?—that is as may be—but how has he bettered himself? To answer that question even roughly necessitates an inquiry into this: what has he had to do?

I need not enter into the question in detail. Suffice it to say that to succeed as a teacher—as a teacher, be it understood, not necessarily as a schoolmaster, for the terms differ—a man needs spend his whole energies, not only in school, that is to say, but also in the playground; for in these days we teach cricket and

football no less than the fifth proposition and factitive verbs. And there are I could not say how many ways in which a man may teach : influence if you prefer the word—it means the same, for who will forbid me to say that preparatory school assistant masters make character ?

He will not gain his experience at one school only. Not many men stay more than six years under the same head master ; indeed the average figure must be considerably less than that, for some head masters make it a rule not to keep their assistants longer than three years, no matter what their record at the school may have been ; this, it is said, lest they fall into a groove, and many men have a horror of that. But let him be a model master, start his career at twenty-three or twenty-four, and stay six years at his first post—not a very common occurrence ; let him take another post for a further period of six years, and then let him look about him. For he does not stand where he did.

Not, of course, that he has gained nothing. On the contrary, he is incalculably a better schoolmaster than he was twelve years ago. He has discovered methods of teaching, of influencing, of controlling boys, which he not so much as dreamt about at twenty-four, and he has discovered these himself in living experience, which is a different matter from any other mode of discovery. In a word, he has learnt his business. But he has done more than that. He has done solid and lasting work in the world, he has laid the foundations of knowledge in the brains of some scores of boys—a future generation ; perhaps he has helped one or two into the straight ; one need not enlarge on the obvious possibilities. Yet not all this avails him, unless he can combat his great loss. He is an old man.

It might not be supposed, at first sight, that a man of thirty-six is old. You might call forty the prime of life, but the term is misleading, for the prime of life is a different age for different men. For a successful schoolmaster it is (I dare say) forty, for an unsuccessful schoolmaster there is no prime of life. You are not an old man at thirty-six if you can see your way to a bigger income than you had at twenty-six ; but if you cannot—nay, if you must look forward to the same amount at forty, be uncertain of all of it at fifty, and certain of none of it at sixty, what meaning has the prime of life to that sort of man ?

It is a situation that must be faced. Pity 'tis, that commonly it is faced too late. For by this it will be seen that the word 'success' as applied to a schoolmaster has a purely monetary signifi-

cation. You are not successful, necessarily, though you have laid the foundations of the career of a Roberts, a Russell, a Stevenson, a Benson, but make money over the childhood of a parcel of nobodies, and leave their futures to take care of themselves, and you have done your duty. Make it a monetary matter: you have no other sure road before you.

Now I do not say that it is impossible for a preparatory school assistant master to save money. I know only one man who has done so, however: he had money of his own. It might be possible, under present circumstances, with years of unstinted work, rigid economy, and whole-hearted self-denial, for a man of forty to find himself richer by a thousand pounds than when he started the business. But this I say, such cases are exceedingly rare. And it must be remembered that a schoolmaster's holidays are longer than any other man's. Unless he has a home to go to (and there we have possible money in the background) or can manage a good holiday tutorship, he will find that four months in the year when he must keep himself are no inconsiderable matter. The undoubted fact is this: that the vast majority of men thus situated do not save a penny. What, then, becomes of them?

I believe that if it were possible to obtain statistics on this point, they would make a human document hideously interesting. Personally, up to the present date, I know or have worked with nearly sixty preparatory school assistant masters. Of these, twenty-four are still assistant masters, eight are curates, four have achieved schools of their own, one became a barrister, another a solicitor, one is a professional tenor, one grows tomatoes, another is a bookmaker, another digs for gold. One old man shot himself. Two are out of work, and of the remainder I know nothing definitely. But are not even these small figures curious? Leave out of reckoning the gardener, the bookmaker, and the others who have broken away: concern yourself with the man that is dead, with those who are still assistant masters, and with those who would be if they could. Of that pair who cannot find work, one was thrown out of employment by the sudden bankruptcy of his principal: he is well over forty: I doubt his getting another post. And the other is a music-master: he is only a year or two over thirty, to be sure, but he has no degree, and when he is a little older—still, a sober piano-tuner is worth something. The others range in age from forty-three to twenty-three: of course there exist older than these, but they have not occurred in my personal experience; I have heard of them. Yet even of these twenty-

four, one has set himself to learn shorthand ; another has unsettled notions as to the bicycle trade and the profits of a beerhouse.

The point is that, as matters now stand, however capable a teacher the man may be, however much good he may have done, or have it in him to do, in this profession alone a man is worse off at forty than at twenty-five—unless, as I say, he has been able to save, and not all good men have saving instincts. And partly because he cannot join in the boys' games to the same extent as before—a preparatory school assistant master must play games—the older he gets the less useful he becomes. Is there any other profession in which a man is not worth his salt at fifty ?

I must remind the reader that I am speaking entirely with regard to preparatory schools. The public schoolmaster need not, of course, join in the games ; he may do so for his own pleasure, or for others' profit, but he need not see the grass of the playing-fields twice a term unless he wishes. Younger boys, however, need direction nowadays in play as much as in work ; need coaching at the nets, personal example at football : only a young man can give that, and only young men are asked to give it.

I do not know why all this should be spoken of with bated breath. I do not know why the superannuated schoolmaster should not have as big an audience as Mr. Kipling's troop-sergeant-major, could he find some one to sing of him. Perhaps they are only schoolmasters who sincerely recognise the fact ; perhaps the general public does not realise what the man has done in the past, what he must do in the future. After all, one does not stop in the street to talk with sandwichmen. But the fact remains that the thing is hidden, passed over, annihilated by silence. The *Preparatory Schools Review* refers to it as a painful subject : an editorial comment, this, on a letter from an assistant master. Still, among schoolmasters there have been made various proposals relative to the position of the moneyless assistant. I am in hopes of interesting a larger audience. Let me classify these suggestions as they fall into two divisions : first, corrective of matters as they now stand ; second, deterrent to those who would enter the profession.

Of corrective notions, a small matter to begin with. The assistant master must grow older—accept that fact. But make the conditions under which he does so easier for him. Relieve him of the petty duties that become more and more irksome the oftener they have been performed—these are for younger men. The elder is to lead a more leisurely life : as his grey hairs, so

shall be his duty; the more venerable his appearance, the less reason to thrust perpetual youth upon him. Superfluous proposals! bare justice! cries the layman; but the fact remains that at no school with which the writer is acquainted will you find an accentuated difference of treatment of master and master. And yet why tar with the same broad brush thirty-five and twenty-two when it comes to weathering the sun and storms of supervision duty? Teacup storms, if you will, but a decade of them! Might not the master mariner nearing the end of his voyage expect serener waters?

Or we might gradually raise his wages. Would it not be conducting matters only on business lines if the salary of forty were double that of twenty-five? There is some weight in the suggestion; but to make it effective I suspect that initial salaries would have to be lowered, and in this I see difficulties, of which there is presently more to be said. And, after all, we do not here touch on the real money question, which is, not how little is the man to be paid when young, but rather, what should he have to show for his labour when he is old?

This brings me to a third proposal, on which more thought and labour have been expended, I fancy, than on any other. I refer to a proposed system of insurance. It is put forward by a well-known preparatory school head master, who, recognising that the assistant master straight from the University is himself as much a schoolboy as anything else; that he is, above all things, unbusinesslike: that he does not realise what only the man of experience can realise, his future position; that inducements to save money, therefore, are for him almost non-existent: recognising all this, Mr. Bartholomew has formulated a system of what I might call compulsory thrift. He has set out to make the scheme as attractive as possible, and in this, I think, he has been successful. As to the probabilities of other success—But first for the scheme itself.

It is supposed that, under arrangements with an insurance society which appear feasible, an assistant master invests his savings at 3 per cent. compound interest. At the end of the fifth year he becomes entitled to a 10 per cent. bonus on his accumulated savings; at the end of the sixth year he receives a bonus of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on his sixth year's contribution; at the end of the seventh year a bonus of 15 per cent. on his seventh year's contribution, and so on; the bonus increasing at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. up to the end of the thirteenth year, when it remains stationary at the high rate of 30 per cent.

That is to say, supposing that £30 were invested yearly for twenty years, and allowed to accumulate with bonuses at compound interest of 3 per cent., the investor would find himself in possession of a little over a thousand pounds. There was an alternative scheme, by which the bonuses advance by 5 per cent. up to the tenth year; but the result is practically the same. Undoubtedly there is something to be done with a thousand pounds. And the scheme had, at the time of publication, the approval of the head masters of Rugby, Clifton, Marlborough, and Winchester.

But the backbone of the scheme—the bonus? It is to be supplied from a separate fund. And that fund is to be provided by no less a personage than the head master himself of the preparatory school, who is asked to cover his assistant's savings at the rate of £5 for every £30 invested, the 'cover' to accumulate also at 3 per cent., and, augmented by moneys incoming from outside subscribers, to provide the funds necessary for the yearly bonus.

I am afraid the scheme is invertebrate. I will not enlarge on the fact that more than a year has passed since its published formulation: there may be irons in the fire of which I know nothing. I have this objection to make to it. Apart from the difficulties which I see in the path of a man entering a new school—can he afford, think you, to wait until he finds a post where the head master is a subscriber?—there is one cogent reason for predicting failure for the scheme. I would sweepingly assert that not five per cent. of preparatory school head masters would cover their assistants' savings. I do not intend to belabour them with epithets: I will say, even, that a head master need be farsighted and philanthropic out of the common to endorse Mr. Bartholomew's scheme in a practical manner. For twenty, thirty, forty—nay, five pounds a year is something to look at, even for a head master; and the present system is, that he pays his men out of hand. Perhaps they deserve more of him; but that does not affect what I believe to be the fact, that preparatory school head masters have not endorsed the scheme, and will not endorse it.

There has been made another suggestion. The author of it, with the moderately common spectacle of a head master and a partner before him, conceived the notion of expanding this system into something larger. 'I have found it!' cries he. 'Not one partner, but many partners. Let each head master take to

him those of his assistants whose services deserve, whose energies claim some share in the conduct of his school. Let it be the aim of this little band to work together to the profit of all; and henceforward we shall see, not one man helped to a competence by a number of paid assistants (who have no monetary interest in the school's welfare), but a staff of men with a common end, the filling of a common moneybox. In short, here is a system of profit-sharing. Think well of it, my masters.'

The proposal comes from an assistant master. And at first sight the thing seems fair enough, and feasible. Should we not be blessed with a lessened competition? would not preparatory schools become few in number, and in proportion large, instead of increasing daily, and only a dozen boys to set you going? Would not the head master best safeguard his own interests, by decimating the host of his rivals? Truly, at first sight it would seem so. But, as a matter of fact, where will you find half a dozen, five, four, three men whose views on the elements of teaching, whose temperaments, whose wives (grant the necessity) agree sufficiently well for that? I declare I had almost asked if a partnership of two were possible. But is it conceivable that happy families such as these could exist in every other parish?

And the proposal comes from an assistant master. What of the head master? Of his nine points, will he concede eight? He has climbed the uphill road himself, has reached the level pathway at the top; is he to turn and stretch a rope for others? Nay, rather, but to hurl down stones upon them. For an unselfish schoolmaster is a contradiction in terms; you might as well speak of a generous auctioneer: it is business, and that is all. Some, doubtless, in the plurality of partners think to spy salvation; but how many of them be head masters? Which, after all, is an important consideration.

So far, I have attempted to show what are the existing conditions, and what proposals have been made to better them. The conditions are—who will lessen the word's meaning?—unsatisfactory; and I, at least, can see little hope in what suggestions have been put forward for their betterment. Therefore to all who have a career to choose I say: Unless you can now see your way to a school of your own in the near future, or unless you thoroughly realise that this teaching profession can be little but a stop-gap to you, before entering upon the real business of life, choose any other calling than that of an assistant master at a preparatory school. Year will follow year, and find you in no

whit benefited at its close; twenty years pass, and you have done work for your generation—you have bettered yourself by absolutely nothing.

And if they will not be warned? Then, as I conceive, some safeguard must be instituted against them. And first, to protect the man from himself: it must be made more difficult for him to place himself in the false position of an educated man of forty living upon charity. Second, to protect the head master from him; for why, of all professions, should that of a schoolmaster be so lightly undertaken? Not that I would make the calling unattractive: we want good men for good work. But I would beset with difficulties the path of every nobody who pays half a crown to an agent and expects board, lodging, and pocket-money for the asking, no matter what his qualifications may be for the business. I asked the question, How is the demand for preparatory school assistant masters met? It is met anyhow.

Who would employ a man as a builder solely on the qualification that he had lived in a house? Who would engage a gardener merely because he might be supposed to be fond of flowers? Yet every year men enter the scholastic profession who have no notion of the art of teaching, nor always mean to learn it. I am not to disparage the work eventually done by some of these; there have been birds of passage, so to speak, who have given most valuable service, and I am the last to cavil at that; but there have been, and there are others, of whom the least to be said is that they have done their pupils even less good than they have done themselves. One scoundrel I know, whose record is now black and white in the *Newgate Calendar*; but he became a schoolmaster only because no other career was possible for him. Surely the teaching profession might be made more difficult for such as he was!

But there are scoundrels in every profession, and it is not particularly against these that I would establish a safeguard. No, but rather against those who become schoolmasters headlong—because of the poverty that pinches, or the parents who will not wait, or because a master's lodgings alone show them an open door. To examine, then, proposals deterrent to those who would adopt this calling.

Seemingly, but one has been made. It is that the salaries paid to novices should be considerably less. It quarrels a little with the insurance scheme, for it would be impossible for the beginner to save; but I do not know that this is the greatest

objection which can be brought against it. Opinions may be divided as to the market value of young men fresh from the University, considered as teachers: this at least is incontestable, that there is keen competition to get the best of them. And the bait is, as a rule, a high salary. There is, of course, a limit beyond which no head master would go; but I should fancy that £120 for the first year is as good an offer as any preparatory school makes to a beginner. And if the (probably) best men are attracted by the best salaries, who will be sanguine enough to offer a quarter of the average amount, and expect an equal number of equally good applicants? Suppose even that a dozen leading schoolmasters agreed to offer a maximum of £50 a year to men with no experience. What would be the consequence? That the minor schools would secure the best masters, and that the positions of leading and minor schools would be reversed. Some obscure dominie of twenty boys would obtain the services of such a desirable person as the captain of the Oxford Eleven, to teach good cricket and the Greek alphabet, and his school would advance by leaps and bounds to the front rank. By *Hermes*! but you will not find a leading schoolmaster to risk such a consequence as that.

Yet if it were not *Utopian*! If it were possible to reduce initial salaries so greatly as to deter even one-half of those who now enter this profession, then I think no more need be said upon the matter at all. Those who became schoolmasters would have counted the cost. But if, as I believe, initial salaries are not to be reduced, and the calling of the schoolmaster is still to remain as attractive as ever, then a search must be made for some other remedy.

Not many months ago, Mr. Arthur Sidgwick first disclosed to the public the outlines of his scheme for the training of teachers. Of that scheme I intend to give no details, nor to discuss the arguments of its advocates and opponents. These are elsewhere accessible. To attempt a brief description, however, Mr. Sidgwick lays these proposals before us. Given that during the first year or so of his career the novice is worth very little considered as a teacher—he is in point of fact learning how to teach: let him anticipate this first year by a course of instruction in teaching, and enter upon his duties with a certain amount of theoretical knowledge, and, more important, with some practical experience of the difficulties which will confront him. A course of lectures on the theory of education; the reading of such works as those of Dean Bradley, Edward Thring, and Sir Joshua Fitch, to be followed by

an examination ; lessons in voice-production and articulation ; and finally, genuine practice in teaching, obtained either by the manipulation of classes under the superintendence of a competent mentor, or by a lightly paid probationership as master at a school : grant a diploma to the man who comes through it all successfully, make such a diploma a *sine quâ non* in a prospective master's qualifications, and we are on the high road to a badly needed reformation.

For here, in this necessary diploma, is, as I take it, the safeguard. The head master is assured, at least, that his new master has his heart in his work ; and more important still, the young man himself realises that time and trouble must be spent before he can hope successfully to enter the profession. The prospect of post-graduate work and more money to be spent (for it will cost something) will deter the man we do not want as a teacher ; and those who have spent their labour and money in obtaining the diploma will also, it may be hoped, have studied their own position and capabilities to some purpose.

I know that all this must take time. And it is easy to see that not all preparatory schoolmasters in the future will, as a fact, possess diplomas, any more than all of them now possess degrees. There are too many men wanted for the work. But if preference be given—as it surely must—to those who possess diplomas : if it be made more and more difficult for a man with only a degree to obtain a situation as schoolmaster—then there is some hope for the betterment of existing conditions.

In the education of the poorer classes we have made vast strides, even since the days of Forster. But in upper-class education—surely as important a matter—we are content with much that is old-time and past service ; it may be that not even the next generation will realise how haphazard and empiric many of our methods have been. There is some hope of Canon Lyttelton. For he aims at centralisation and classification of resources—a modern trend of thought this, and objectionable to many, but the reformation will come. We shall have local centres of education, committees and sub-committees, and under their control much power and knowledge will be gained, which at present are unattainable. There will follow a corollary or two ; perhaps, even, the disappearance of the school agent, which must happen before the millennium. That also will benefit the schoolmaster.

I spoke of the subject of this essay as a side issue. In the

educational reforms which (it is probable) will be the outcome of the next decade, we are mainly to consider, as I suppose, the interests of those who learn. But the interests of these are so inextricably bound up with the life-conditions of those who teach, that possibly I shall be forgiven if I seem to have drawn undue attention to the history of so insignificant, so necessary, and—may I say it?—sometimes so honoured a personage as the assistant master of an English Preparatory School.

ERIC PARKER.

The Thirteenth Anniversary.

MR. CRANBY sat rather meditatively in the back parlour of his little shop in Upperton High Street. He was a cheerful little man with a face as bright as an apple, and a small knob of a nose like a ripe cherry fastened on it. He wore habitually between his lips a long churchwarden pipe, which he transported as he moved about his shop or parlour by the help of a stubby forefinger crooked over its stem near the bowl. It was not always alight, but was always in Mr. Cranby's mouth, as if he received from its suction, even when empty, a chastened gladness. He was a corn-dealer to his trade, as you might see by the labelled parcels disposed in shelves about his shop. You might see the fact, too, without such testimony in corroboration, by the outward aspect of Mr. Cranby's clothing and person, which bore scatterings of the ignoble chaff of the golden grain. Above, over Mr. Cranby's shop and parlour, was a big loft or barn, a dark musty place in which cats and mice and big moths lived amongst sacks of heaped grain. But there were other things lining the walls of this dark loft—things that Mr. Cranby could put his hand-on in the semi-darkness, knowing by long familiarity where each stood; and these were cases of stuffed birds, a single specimen in each case, each case a square black box with a glass front—square because that was the shape that packed best and most closely. So they stood all round, like another layer of the wall's bricks. Mr. Cranby was a great ornithologist. People whose names were quite big in the land, with several letters of the alphabet, indicating that they belonged to certain learned societies, after those names, were in constant communication with Mr. Cranby. He did not put his birds in cases just for show—like humming birds or waxen fruits on a lodging-house table—but kept them in their useful square boxes for reference, and for pride of possession, loving them a deal better than the bags of grain. Downstairs in the parlour the wall was lined by cabinets containing little flat drawers, in which were

disposed—in some birds' eggs, in some the skins of birds laid flat one on another, with the Latin name of each tied to one of its legs, and a general odour of preservatives exhaling from it which, mingling with the scent of Virginia shag from the churchwarden pipe, formed the atmosphere in which Mr. Cranby loved to live.

He was in his parlour; yet still he had about him the long apron—pinafore rather, for it was tied round his neck as well as about his waist—in which he conducted both his grain-dealing business in the shop and the more congenial occupation of skinning and setting up his birds in the parlour. For all the birds, whether merely skinned and preserved or set up artistically on branches, were the work of Mr. Cranby's own taxidermy—an art in which he was famous among naturalists.

Mr. Cranby was thoughtful. From the parlour he could see through—for the upper part of the door was glass—into the shop; and, after all, even without this espionage, no one was likely to rob him. It would have needed a very desperate man to run the risks of being taken red-handed for the sake of a few grains of oats. Sparrows were the robbers most to be feared. But Mr. Cranby did not grudge them a peck or two if they chose to hop in, in their cheeky way, through the open door and so out again.

The boy was away just now—gone home to his tea. No one knew why Mr. Cranby kept this boy. He was scarcely an ornament, and undoubtedly was of no use. It is scarcely ornamental to sit on the counter all day long with your legs hanging down and big boots sticking well out from a pair of rather short trousers, with your hat on the back of your head, while you whistle a music-hall ditty. To be sure he kept the sparrows away.

Mr. Cranby was thoughtful. He had finished his own tea; the things were on the table in disorder beside him. It was warm, and he had not donned his coat. After a time he rose out of his shiny armchair, refilled and lighted his pipe, and walked through the parlour door and so out through the little shop. He left the shop door open, regardless that whoso willed might enter. The boy would soon be returning from his tea to resume his business of drumming with his heels on the counter. So Mr. Cranby stepped without misgiving into the High Street and into the warm evening air. There were not many people in the street at this time, nor if there had been would Mr. Cranby's manner of coming out, minus his hat and minus his coat, have caused them any wonder. They knew him very well in the little country town. His figure, rather

rotund, with the apron tied at neck and waist, and churchwarden pipe between mouth and forefinger, was very familiar to them. Upperton was very proud of Mr. Cranby.

It accepted him with his eccentricities as part of his genius, and was almost as proud of the one as of the other.

The course of Mr. Cranby's walk was as familiar to his town-fellows as his appearance—fifty yards along the little High Street, across the road, and a turn off to the left and down a narrower and steeper street, cobble-stoned, for a hundred yards, at the foot of which a gleam of water showed the placid canal, whereon the smoky barges carried almost to Mr. Cranby's door his bags of grain.

No barges floated up the bags of grain just now. It was seldom in these days that they brought corn to Mr. Cranby's garner. The bulk of his corn merchant's business had gone past him, leaving him, when the stage-coaches left the road, with few customers except the country gentry; and a large amount of their corn they grew on their home farms or bought from their fat tenant-farmers—fat, for the days of profound agricultural depression were not yet come. Mr. Cranby had watched with perfect content the corn merchandise go away from him—more than content that it left him so much the more leisure to attend to his birds.

Perhaps by reason of his long study of birds and close intimacy with them his eyes had assumed a normal aspect of bird-like roundness and beadiness, and in ordinary circumstances he looked out from them as cheerily as a robin-redbreast; but just now they were dimmed over by the 'pale cast of thought' as he paced along the rather grass-grown towing-path. He went up the slope of the little bridge that arched over the canal—arched to leave space for the barges to pass along beneath it—and stood there, with his elbows on the little parapet of the bridge, looking down into the placid yellow water below. He smoked, in his thoughtful laboured way, with pneumatic indrawing of the cheeks at each effort of suction, sending forth solemn blue smoke-curls into the sky.

The arch of the bridge was the limit of Mr. Cranby's walk. Upperton, which had acquiesced in his hatless and coatless stroll thus far, would have been stirred into surprise if Mr. Cranby had extended his walk further. And there was no knowing what the effect of this might have been upon Upperton, for the emotion of surprise was unfamiliar to it. So there Mr. Cranby stood and looked down meditatively into the canal, where some flat-backed water-insects with long spidery legs were scudding over the placid

surface, cutting wedge-shaped wakes as they went. Now and again Mr. Cranby grunted at them appreciatively, and a smile broadened on his apple cheeks as two skated into collision and sheered off again angrily. Nevertheless, underlying the smile and the appreciation was the constant shadow of thought.

Presently from over the levels of water meadow that stretched with only the interruption of willow-fringed ditches to the purple smoke of the manufacturing town of Dursley came the sounds of a cheery and not unmusical voice raised in the familiar refrain, 'Oh, catch 'em alive—catch 'em alive!'

Over and over again the man sang it, as he came swinging along the causeway over the meadows—sang it, obviously not that he could imagine a customer for his fly-papers to be lurking in any of the ditches, though no doubt some of the poor cows would have been grateful for a plaister of it on their backs if so be it might have saved them some of the perpetual toil of tail-whisking. But it appeared to be from pure native gladness of heart that the man sang the melodious refrain with which he had been making the streets of Dursley ring all day long—just a little, possibly, to the annoyance of some of the more crusty of its inhabitants.

'Well, Jacob,' said Mr. Cranby, turning to him and removing his long pipe from his mouth as the fly-paper man came through the gate that kept the cows off the canal bridge, 'done a good day's business to-day?'

'Pretty fair, Mr. Cranby; pretty fair. It's been a fine summer for flies.'

'That's right, Jacob,' said Mr. Cranby; and, restoring his pipe to his lips, resumed the study of his water-insects.

The fly-paper man stood awkwardly a moment, as if divided between a mental doubt of the best manner of terminating the interview and a professionally sporting desire to attack the flies that found an attraction on the shining surfaces of Mr. Cranby's bald head. By way of compromise, he removed his hat from his own head, in order to study admiringly the fine entomological collection of the common house-fly which he carried, by way of advertisement, on the glutinous paper with which his hat was encircled. At the same time he said, with bashful sympathy, 'Looking for her, I see, Mr. Cranby.'

'It's thirteen years ago this very day,' Mr. Cranby replied, without turning from his insects.

'Dear, dear, Mr. Cranby, is it indeed?' said the fly-paper man behind him. Then, putting on his entomological hat with

a gentle manner that was a mute expression of his fellow-feeling for Mr. Cranby's obvious sadness, he passed along, without more words, over the bridge.

Halfway down the steep cobbled street that sloped to the canal a bright-faced woman, with two children at her skirts, came to meet him.

'We've heard yer call, father,' said the woman cheerily, as she came to him. 'We've heard father's call, didn't we, Maria?' she turned to the girl, the elder of the two children dragging at her skirt.

'Yes, we've heard yer call, father,' said the little girl, in a faithful echo of her mother.

'We've heard yer call, father,' chimed in the little boy, in a kind of echo of the echo.

'Has you done a good day, father?' asked the wife.

'Pretty fair day, my lass,' said the man, bending a kind face down to her, as he put an arm round her waist; and so the little party climbed together up the street.

At the top of the street, where it went into the High Street, the fly-paper man stopped and turned round, as if for a last glimpse of the sunlit levels of the water meadows before the outlook was swallowed up in the streets of the town. The outlook included Mr. Cranby, still standing bareheaded on the bridge considering the water.

'He's still looking for her, Mary,' said the husband, indicating Mr. Cranby, and speaking with a pity which might have been a result of comparing his own populous hearth with the solitude of Mr. Cranby's domesticity. 'It's thirteen years to-day since he lost his little girl.'

'But no one knows she drowned herself, Jacob,' his wife objected, with a woman's matter-of-factness. 'They never found the corpse.'

'No, they don't know it, and that's true,' he replied; 'but anyways she went—disappeared—shoo fly, and the fly's gone; and not being a fly, and therefore without wings,' pursued Jacob philosophically, 'there's no readier a way for managin' a disappearance than the canal. And as for not findin' the corpse—hum!' and he screwed his face to indicate that the subject was not a pleasing one, 'it's a muddy bottom to the canal, any way.'

'It's lonesome, no doubt, for Mr. Cranby and that's a fact,' said his wife, with a little sigh of pitifulness tempered by a little

pious thankfulness for her own bountiful home; and with this consideration the party pursued their way along the High Street.

Meanwhile it was a similar consideration, beyond doubt, that saddened Mr. Cranby in his contemplation of the insects. The creatures, indeed, since Jacob's observation, had ceased to be the subject of his conscious attention. He had become altogether absorbed, as the fly-paper man had said, 'in looking for her.' It was not that he actually expected the placid canal to give up its dead after all these thirteen years, did not even actually admit to himself that his little fourteen-year-old daughter, when she vanished—vanished and left no trace—had met her death in the waters of the canal beside which she was used to play; yet it seemed but too likely that this had been her fate, and it had come to be a saying of the townspeople, when they saw him take his accustomed walk and stand in his accustomed resting-place, leaning his elbows on the parapet of the bridge and sending up the blue spirals from his long pipe, that 'he was looking for her.' Mr. Cranby was familiar with the phrase, and accepted it, without much criticism, as an account of his doings. He was looking for her. No one had known how his heart had ached over the loss which had left him so lonely—he had lost his wife many long years before—for he was a man who did not talk of his troubles though his naturally cheerful heart demanded sympathy in its joys. So to most he seemed a cheery, companionable old man, and one with whom it was pleasant to chat, though his love of natural history, into which they could not follow him, put him a little apart from, and perhaps a trifle above, them.

It began to grow a little chilly on the bridge, and the midges became troublesome as the pipe died down. Mr. Cranby left the water-skaters, and began to ascend the little cobbled street homeward. Halfway up the street two children, girl and boy, were playing on the narrow footway. The girl had an old and dirty doll, which she was treating in the most ferocious manner, holding it head downwards by the foot with one hand, while with the other she hacked at it fiercely with a broken-handled dinner-knife, which she seemed to have picked out of the gutter. The little boy expostulated shrilly:

'What's you doin', Lizzie? You'll kill the doll in two.'

'Garn!' she answered wrathfully, snatching it away, as he offered to take it from her; 'I'm on'y servin' her as they did brother Johnny up to the 'orsepital when they cut 'is leg off.'

'Garn, yerself,' retorted the boy in his turn. 'Ow d'you know they served 'un so? You didn't see 'un.'

'Didn't I see 'un? I did. 'Cos I was in the 'orsespital myself with a broken arm, what father give me;' and therewith she dealt the doll a yet more vigorous cut, at which its poor sawdust gushed plentifully forth.

Mr. Cranby did not wait for more. He did not stay to chide the small savage. It did not even occur to him to consider the little likelihood that the girl had been present in the operating-room. His mind found enough to dwell on in the picture suggested by the phrase so simply spoken—'a broken arm what father gave me.'

Had he any such treatment of a child to reproach himself with that his little daughter should have run away from him? Often he had been driven to correct her, for hers had been a wayward nature. On that very afternoon, the afternoon now thirteen years ago to the day, on which she had gone, he had been obliged, with pity in his heart, to punish her. The memory of it was very distinct to him. The nature of the offence, harmless enough in itself, but aggravated by the child's rebellious defiance when he corrected her, even the very words spoken on either side, were quite clear in his remembrance. It had ended, as such scenes had often ended, in his taking the little girl to her room—that tiny room opening out of his own, which he always kept locked now—and turning the key on her and on her sobs. Then he had gone down to the parlour suffering such affliction of heart that after a quarter of an hour's suction of the empty pipe he had to go up the short flight of wooden stairs again and ask at the door, in the usual formula, 'Is Lucy a good girl now?'

But there had come no answer. The silence had not surprised Mr. Cranby in the least, though no doubt it had deepened his affliction. It generally happened that this small comedy had to be played at least twice, and more often three times, before a plaintive tear-broken voice answered 'Yes, Lucy's a good girl now.' Then there would be hugs and a few more tears of penitence, and joy that the cloud had passed and that the sun was shining again, and, with many promises of amendment, life resumed its even course.

On this occasion, however, now thirteen years ago, it had happened that not only Mr. Cranby's second but even his third appeal remained unanswered; and this had seldom occurred. Nevertheless, he went downstairs again for a third time without misgiving, and endeavoured to possess his soul in patience. When his fourth appeal brought no response, he longed, with a longing he could

hardly resist, to open the door and attempt to reason with the stiff-necked little sinner. Once more, however, he descended to his parlour. But when yet a fifth time he tried in vain, his impatience carried him away, and he quickly turned the key and went in. A moment's glance showed him that the room was empty. The bird had flown, and, since the door had been locked on the outer side, it needed no powerful effort of the deductive faculty to perceive that the bird must have flown by way of the other outlet, the open window. Mr. Cranby looked out with blank eyes of horror. The window gave on a little courtyard, into which the carts came to receive the sacks of grain lowered by a wheel-and-windlass arrangement from the granary door. A horrid vision had possessed Mr. Cranby's fancy even in the brief moment that he needed to cross the tiny room. A quick thankfulness replaced his apprehension as he saw that the maimed body of his vision did not lie helplessly on the stones beneath the window. The courtyard was empty. Marks on the wall beside the waterpipe showed that the wild little girl had used this pipe as the inadequate means to her descent. Mr. Cranby shivered as he gauged the danger she had run, then sighed yet again in his gratitude that she had escaped it.

From that day to the present, thirteen years later, no one to the knowledge of Upperton had set eyes on Mr. Cranby's little daughter. Obviously in going out of the courtyard she must have gone out into the High Street, where she was perfectly well known; her beauty and her brightness had made her everybody's favourite. It was impossible, too, but that some of the many who knew her must have seen her; but the very fact that her bright little figure was so familiar in the High Street made it all the less likely that she would be particularly remarked, or that any would take note of the time at which they had seen her last in the accustomed place. There was a tradition, indeed, that some one had met her on the canal bridge, but the tradition had never assumed the position of assured fact, though it had been sufficiently substantial to lend body to the supposition that she might have 'fallen into the canal,' or might have 'drowned herself in the canal,' as persons variously phrased it, according to the charity of their respective judgment.

This was the story that Mr. Cranby had been considering as he studied with the outward eye the skating insects; this was the story that still occupied his mind—with added bitterness of suggestion borrowed from the circumstances of the surgical operation on the doll—as he gained the summit of the steep cobbled street and came out into the High Street. To the greeting

of one or two acquaintances he responded by a gesture of the lips, which one who did not know him might have taken merely for a further effort of suction on his pipe-stem, and so passed on into his dingy little shop.

The boy had returned to his post. He sat with pendulous legs drumming his boot-heels on the side of the counter. His fingers were actively engaged with a pocket-knife and a stick in the manufacture of a whistle. He had already slipped the cylinder of green bark off the smooth white substance of the twig, had fashioned and fitted the mouthpiece, and was experimenting on the result with efforts of expiration as energetic as the severe force of inhalation that Mr. Cranby appeared to apply to his pipe. The effect was not happy. All was not yet well with the instrument. It sounded not 'blinding sweet, oh great god Pan,' but with spasmodic shrieks of torment like the complainings of a bagpipe whose drone is not properly distended. On the boy's facial aspect the effect was scarcely more fortunate. Under normal conditions his head presented a bulbous appearance disproportionately large for the slenderness of his trunk and legs. At present this disproportion was accented by the hue of apoplectic purple that his pneumatic struggles had imparted to his entire visage. After a careless glance at Mr. Cranby as he entered, he took no further notice of him, his whole attention being absorbed by his musical instrument. At that moment he succeeded, by a superhuman effort, in winning from it a scream of unspeakable anguish.

Mr. Cranby stood and looked at him a moment. Then he removed his pipe an inch from his mouth to ask, 'What are you doing, Joe?'

'Makin' whistles,' the boy grunted dourly.

'Hum!' was the extent of Mr. Cranby's remark on this statement. He replaced his pipe between his lips. The boy, having effected some alteration in the mouthpiece of the whistle, again blew on it with such monstrous inflation that his eyes threatened to jump out from his head. The acoustic results, however, were this time less tremendous, for the instrument persisted in remaining absolutely mute.

'There's summat for you up there, Mr. Cranby,' he observed parenthetically, jerking his thumb towards the fixed step-ladder leading up to a square hole in the ceiling, which was the corn-dealer's mode of access from his shop to the granary. Having vouchsafed this intimation, the boy again bent his whole attention on the whistle.

'Something for me?' Mr. Cranby echoed, taking the pipe-stem from his lips with a pop expressive of surprise. 'Where?'

'Up there,' the boy answered with another demonstrative thumb gesture.

'What is it?' Mr. Cranby proceeded.

'She said as I was not to tell,' said the boy glumly.

'She said!' Mr. Cranby echoed again. 'Who's she?'

'She didn't say,' the boy replied; and betook himself to another mute blast on his instrument.

Mr. Cranby was used to the discreet reserve of his attendant. He replaced the pipe between his lips and proceeded slowly to mount the stairs of the step-ladder, escorted at each stage by terrifically shrill accompaniments of the whistle, which at last was hysterically announcing to a horrified world its possession of a voice.

On the third step from the top Mr. Cranby paused. When his feet rested on this step the level of his head was above the level of the granary floor—that is to say, he could see into the granary. And that which he saw there made him pause.

The boy grew subtly aware that the moment was a pregnant one. He ceased from his pneumatic agonies; he even ceased from drumming with his heels, and watched Mr. Cranby with undivided interest.

Suddenly Mr. Cranby uttered a low exclamation. In the attention with which he gazed into the granary his forefinger had unguardedly slipped down the stem of his pipe, and the bowl, still hot, had burnt it. As he withdrew his finger hastily, the pipe fell clashing on the ladder and thence to the floor of the shop, where it crashed itself into pieces. It had never before happened to the boy to see Mr. Cranby let fall his pipe.

But it lay, in its fragments, quite unheeded, as Mr. Cranby continued to gaze intently into his corn-loft. The corners of the loft were dim, with a glint here and there off the glass faces of the cases of stuffed birds; but the sun was low and his setting rays came in in a single beam from the little window in the roof that let a grudging light into the place. In this beam the dust-motes were dancing so thickly as to give it the appearance of a bar of solid golden substance, save where it illumined two objects seated side by side on the granary's floor, a child and a big black cat. The child—it was a girl—sat with arm lovingly round the cat's neck, and both stared, with the fixed solemnity of outlook that only children and cats can compass, at the round apple face and

birdlike eyes of Mr. Cranby. The presence of the cat was no surprise to him—it was his own familiar. Neither had the cat the slightest grounds for staring at the master who was its lifelong friend. The child, however, and Mr. Cranby had every reason for the mutual astonishment that their gaze expressed, for neither had set eyes upon the other before.

After a pause, in which the breaking of the pipe was the only material incident, Mr. Cranby moved one step higher on the ladder.

‘And who,’ he asked, ‘are you?’

Then the little lips opened to reply, with great gravity:

‘Lucy’s a good girl now.’

At that, Mr. Cranby’s astoundment was so amazing that it would have taken but little more to send him reeling after his pipe. Habit, rather than voluntary purpose, kept him safely on the ladder. The boy still sat motionless on the counter, and watched events. Then, across the threshold of the shop, came a fresh ripple of feminine laughter.

‘Lucy’s a good girl now,’ the laughing voice repeated.

Mr. Cranby turned upon the ladder and slowly descended to the floor. Gradually the meaning of the dramatic events so swiftly succeeding each other came crowding in on his confused brain.

‘Lucy!’ he said at length to the laughing figure in the doorway.

‘Yes,’ she replied, nodding, ‘Lucy’s a good girl now.’

Then Mr. Cranby opened his arms, and, heedless of the roundly opened eyes of his attendant, took back his long-lost daughter to his heart.

‘It’s taken her a good while,’ said the lady lightly, seeming much less affected than Mr. Cranby by the meeting. ‘But she’s good now. I’ll tell you, if you like, how she went bad.’

Mr. Cranby, holding her at arms’ length as he surveyed her, tried with indifferent success to connect this smart, laughing lady with the little Lucy that had vanished from him that day thirteen years ago. Somehow he seemed to find the little round-eyed vision, with its arm around the cat’s neck in the loft above, a good deal more like the picture that his memory gave him.

‘You’ve changed, Lucy,’ he said simply.

‘So’ve you, father,’ she replied with a laugh. ‘Well, you’d have changed more too,’ she added with a quick sigh, ‘if you’d been through all I have these thirteen years. When I left you I went to the circus folk.’

'The circus folk!' Mr. Cranby repeated helplessly.

'Don't you remember Nupper's circus that was in the town that day you locked me in? I went off to the shooting gallery, and the lady that had the charge of the shooting gallery let me sleep in the place above, and I took charge of the gallery when she was away.'

'You did, Lucy?' said Mr. Cranby somewhat shocked, yet somewhat admiring.

'And so I got on,' Lucy said with pride, 'until now I'm married to the ring-master, and the little Lucy there's our child. Oh, bless you, she won't fall, father,' said the circus lady serenely, as the child began to clamber down the ladder much to its grandfather's alarm. 'She won't fall; bless you, she can ride Joey, the clown's pony, round the ring now nice as anything.'

'Can she, indeed?' Mr. Cranby said.

'But I'm tired of the life for her, father. It's not the life for her. It's all very well for me, but it's not what I want for her. And what I want is for you to keep her here and let me come and see her now and again when Nupper's is along this way. Will you do that, father?'

'I should think I will, and welcome.'

'And now I must be off again. Just time for the evening show. But I'll be back before closing time (I get off before the end), and show you about putting the little one to bed and the rest, and bring her things round for her. Lucy, take your grandfather's hand, my dear.'

And in a moment, while still he stood dazed by his first astonishment, she was gone again, and Mr. Cranby was only recalled from his state of fixed amazement by a tug of a little paw at his big hand, and there, looking up to him with happy trusting eyes, was the little Lucy, as it seemed to him, that he had lost years before—younger, indeed, than at the time that he had lost her, but still such as he could well remember her.

'Is Lucy a good girl now?' he asked.

And the little lips answered, but more broadly smiling, 'Yes; Lucy's a good girl now.'

Then gradually Mr. Cranby grew to realise that he need go down no more to his questioning of the water-insects and the still green water of the canal. There was a silent hymn of thanksgiving at the old man's heart as he bent down and kissed the uplifted face of his little grandchild.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

'The True Sublime of Boating.'

THEIR boats which journey down the river to Babylon are circular, and made all of skins. For when in the country of the Armenians which dwell above Assyria they have cut and fashioned ribs of willow they stretch over these, on the outside, a covering of skins by way of a bottom, neither distinguishing the stern in any way, nor drawing together the bows, but making them round like a buckler. Having lined the whole of this vessel with reeds and loaded her with a cargo, they let themselves be carried down stream. They chiefly carry jars full of palm wine. The boat is steered by two paddles and two men standing upright, one of them drawing his paddle in and the other thrusting his out. In each vessel is a live ass, and in the larger ones more than one. As soon, therefore, as they have floated down to Babylon, and have disposed of their cargo, they sell by auction the ribs of the vessel and all the reeds, but the skins they load upon the asses and drive them back to Armenia. For it is not possible in any way to voyage up stream on account of the swift current. For this reason also they do not make their boats of wood but of skins. And when, driving their asses, they arrive again in Armenia, they make new boats in the same manner. Of such a kind then are their vessels.'

So far Herodotus in the first book of his history. It may be urged that the description sounds not unlike the famous voyage of the Jumbies who went to sea in a sieve; but modern researches go to prove that it is always safer to believe the Father of History, nor would any one willingly discredit so charming a story. Browning's Waring found happiness in cruising about the Adriatic in a lateener, selling 'fruit, tobacco, and cigars' to English ships on their way to Trieste; but even he never thought of drifting on shipboard down the Euphrates for half a year with a cargo of palm wine and a donkey in the hold and drifting back along the

bank on foot during the other half, his cargo and ship's timbers happily disposed of, his skins on his donkey's back, and his honest gains safe in his pocket.

Look East where whole new thousands are !
In Vishnu-land what Avatar ?

What an ideal life for a philosopher, exquisite in its tranquil monotony, half asleep by day and wholly asleep by night !

But it is a far cry to that ancient river Euphrates, Babylon is fallen and no longer affords a mart for Armenian palm wine. But some faint shadow of those Babylonian voyages is sometimes attempted even in the England of to-day. Adventurous folk may take it into their heads to drift for a summer along narrow water-highways in a canal boat or scud before the breeze in a broad-beamed Norfolk wherry with her single towering black sail. These things have been done and even done with success. But the only perfect form of boat in which to drift with the stream and let the foolish world fall back into the distance of forgotten things is the Canadian canoe. Stevenson explored the Moselle in a Rob-Roy ; but a Rob-Roy is a restless, uncomfortable craft. It has not the divine repose of a Canadian.

If you have no skill in paddling, turn to your Herodotus and learn from his Babylonians. Nothing could be sounder than their method of steering, 'to draw the paddle in or thrust it out,' according as you would turn this way or that. And though the Canadian is very far from being 'circular like a buckler,' it yet retains the Babylonian peculiarity of a stern not distinguished from the bows, together with a truly Babylonian aversion to going against the stream. I am afraid it will not accommodate a donkey. Considerations of space put this out of the question. But modern civilisation comes to the rescue with its railways, and when your voyage is ended and you have drifted far enough you can place your canoe in a train and trudge homeward, serene in the knowledge that no ancient Babylonian ass would bear it more safely. After all there is something to be said even for railways. The wise man, therefore, will look out on a map some quiet English river, proceed by train to its upper waters, his canoe safely stowed in the guard's van, and when he has reached his journey's end drop it into the water and let the stream carry it and him where it pleases. The map will always show him where a dinner and a night's lodging may be found, and he will thus be free to proceed as quickly or as slowly as inclination prompts.

Let him take a companion with him. It is not good for man to be alone. Moreover, a companion will do half the paddling—perhaps more than half.

This is the true sublime of boating, not to ply up and down a mile or two of the Thames, as the Philistines do, but to look out a river for yourself flowing through pleasant English country, with here and there a village or perhaps a market town, and commit yourself with confidence to its placid bosom. You will then know what peace is. Is the morning cool and fresh, you can paddle as energetically as you please. Is the sun hot overhead or the wind adverse, you can creep along down stream under the bank, sheltered by overhanging willows. Is the wind with you, hoist an umbrella and you will sail along merrily. Does it rain, put the umbrella over your head and lie up under the lee of a bank. You will be as dry as if you were under your own roof-tree. The ends of a canoe are so shaped that, with the aid of cushions, you will sit as in an armchair, and can read or chat as suits your whim. You can even lie at full length as on a couch and slumber. You are absolutely free. You may cover twenty miles on one day and only two on another, as it pleases you. The map will always show you how far you are from a night's lodging, or you can gather information from the chance rustic on the bank. When you are tired of the river you can lift your canoe ashore, leave it under the shadow of a friendly hedge and stroll to the nearest village. Nothing ever damages a canoe. It has a charmed life. But if you are nervous take the paddles with you. No one will attempt a voyage in a canoe without them. Possibly as you walk, each of you, like Odysseus, shouldering his paddle, some rustic will ask why you are carrying a winnowing fan upon your stout shoulder, but that need not astonish you if you know your 'Odyssey.' Thus you will spend your days in green places, far away from the smoke of factories, the clatter of traffic, the restless turmoil of life. A market town which wakes up one day in seven to sell vegetables and fat cattle and slumbers serenely the other six is the only link that binds you to modern economic problems and the laws of supply and demand. Your ears will hear only the Siren song of Pelagia:

Loose the sail, rest the oar, float away down,
Fleeting and gliding by tower and town,
Life is so short at best—

On such an expedition you will feel the real charm of unspoiled English country, and that is a better thing than all the show places in Europe—the fat pastures in which the cattle stand knee deep, the yellow fields of corn and wheat on the uplands, the old farmsteads, the red timbered cottages, the grey church towers. Overhead the blue sky of mid-July, around you the still green water flecked with trailing water weeds. Sometimes you will float past old-world country towns unvisited of railways, or dear forgotten villages whose cottage gardens, gay with hollyhocks, run down to the riverside. The panting bicyclist is scouring over dusty highroads, flying at breakneck pace down one hill only to toil painfully up another, his absurd machine at the mercy of a thousand petty mischances. The tourist has fled to the seaside, where he sits upon a bare expanse of sand under a blazing sun and calls it pleasure. The boating enthusiast is pulling for dear life at an oar or rushing madly along a towpath at some ridiculous regatta, wasting the long hot afternoons in purposeless exertion. These know nothing of the true delights of boating, of drifting along a sleepy shady stream smoking a meditative pipe and gazing idly at the green banks slipping past, or the white water-lilies under whose broad leaves the lazy pike are slumbering. Sometimes a busy mill bars your way, but only for a moment. It is easy to disembark, lift your frail craft tenderly from the upper stream into the lower, and then embark again. How sweet it is to listen to the splashing wheel and the joyous tinkle of the water as it rushes foaming over the pebbles below the mill-pool, while the miller, white to the eyes with sweet-smelling flour, leans upon the wooden railing of his bridge and watches you with a good-natured grin. There is something about a miller's life which inevitably tends to produce a cheerful disposition; I would rather be a miller than a millionaire in my next incarnation if I am allowed to choose. Sometimes there is no mill, but only a merry green weir chattering to itself contentedly under its shady poplars, or, if the river is full, hurrying with a rush and a swirl through its open floodgates.

As for food, the friendly map will show you where a village will supply your needs, or an unexpected inn may greet you on the waterside with its hospitable sign, where you can feed on the freshest of eggs and butter and fruit, on golden honey in the comb, and the sweetest of country loaves. Best of all, in the hot afternoons, before the shadows have begun to lengthen towards

evening, the kettle will boil merrily on a spirit-stove in the canoe, and tea, the best and greatest invention of civilised existence, will make glad the heart of man. As the sun verges towards the west a grateful coolness steals into the air, and at last, in the gloaming or under the silver light of the rising moon, a village is reached and with it dinner and bed.

These wanderings on unexplored water-ways are full of delightful surprises—wonderful old churches, absurdly large for the tiny hamlets they serve, with their decaying brasses and battered tombs of alabaster; fragments of ruined monasteries; stately Jacobean houses, with shady walled gardens; quaint rambling inns, with creaking signs, where fifty years ago the mail coach drew up daily with a merry tootle of the horn and a grating jar of the brake; red-tiled cottages, built before even Queen Anne was dead; market towns, with wide streets and narrow pavements, all that remains of Merrie England in those happy uncomfortable days before railways were invented. Even on the Thames, spoilt though much of it is with pompous hotels and encroaching villas, one can still find at times some old-world village not yet awakened from the sleep of the Past, how much more on these lovely, lonely streams, where never a boat, save a fishing punt, is to be seen! *Vidi ego*— But mere prudence forbids me to reveal the names of these unforgotten water-ways.

There is never a time of year when a river is not beautiful. In winter the brown water hurrying past in swirls and eddies under a grey sky, while on the banks the leafless trees stretch their gaunt branches to heaven, has a sombre beauty hardly inferior to the smiling streams of summer. The foaming weirs, having some ado to carry off the flood of rain-fed waters, roar tumultuously, and as the sun goes down in a blaze of orange and red, the crumbling banks and decaying willows, leaning fantastically this way and that, make up a picture of sublime desolation. In early autumn, before the rains have fallen, the stream is clear and still; too tired to move after the long summer heats. Now and then when a gentle breeze sobs in the trees over head, a yellow leaf floats down the air till it rests upon the water, and the apple falls with a thud upon the dewy grass of the orchards on the river bank, just as it did long ago in the land of the Lotus-eaters. Then, as the sun sets, soft mists, white and silent, rise steaming from the wet meadows and creep like ghosts along the face of the waters, wrapping all things in their clinging, smoke-like wreaths, and

dulling every sound until the whole world seems hushed in an agony of listening. Through the mist all things are magnified and distorted; the trees upon the banks, so close an hour ago, recede to an immeasurable distance, and the river seems like some vast inland sea through which the canoe steals, a shadow among shadows.

But, in the spring, there is no scope for these nightmare imaginings. All along the banks the pollard willows are bursting into leaf and putting forth young shoots. Soon the hawthorn will be out in a glory of white and pink, and the orchards will be snow-white with blossom, while the cuckoo shouts jubilantly at the thought of having safely deposited her egg in some one else's nest, if that be a true fable. The grass wears its freshest green, and the meadows are gay with country flowers. While later, in glorious June, the air is heavy with the scent of hay, and in the distance the wagons, creaking under their loads, make a pleasant sound. And, oh! the long, long summer evenings on the river in late June, when the sun sinks slowly and reluctantly, grudging to leave so fair a world to the big yellow moon only; when the hoarse cry of the corncrake, with a weird charm in his harsh note that is above nightingales, sounds from the distant field—all the lovely sounds and scents of a still summer night. A month later the harvest is being gathered in, and the distant rattle of the reaping machine, busy and insistent, soothes the ear all through the hot afternoons. The days, alas! are beginning to shorten, and the shadows grow longer and longer; but who will dare to say that summer is dead yet? With the twilight silence falls. The reapers have gone home to bed, nothing is heard among the whisper of the rushes save the boom of the late bee hurrying home to bed, and the faint splash of the paddles as you near your night's resting-place. 'A dream,' you say; 'a picture drawn from imagination.' I answer, 'Try it for yourself,' or rather, don't try it. I want no trespassers upon my rivers.

Yet if there should be among my readers any choice souls who are worthy to taste the joys of such voyages, I will unfold to them some one or two of the secrets of success in them.

In the first place a purse not overloaded with treasure but still sufficiently provided. If your means are small do not let that distress you. When they are exhausted you can always return home. Having no fixed point to which you are obliged to go, you can always stop whenever choice or necessity impels you. As to

the canoe, its length should be twelve feet. The average guard's van will not accommodate anything longer, and anything shorter will not comfortably accommodate you. The railway companies will carry any canoe that will go into a guard's van for a penny a mile, but a canoe that requires a special truck is charged for at the rate of 3*d.* a mile with a minimum fare of 7*s.* 6*d.*

A twelve-foot basswood Canadian will hold comfortably two men and all necessary baggage. If you are inclined to shoot weirs or attempt rash experiments of that kind, it is wiser to land your luggage first, or you may have to spend an unprofitable hour in diving for it. In taking your canoe in and out of a train it is better not to leave it wholly to the mercy of the porters. They are excellent people but occasionally heedless.

Lastly as to your companion, you must choose him as carefully as you choose the canoe itself, for special qualities are required for boating as for any other exercise. The art of sitting still is one of these. Restlessness on the river is inexcusable. The art of doing nothing is another. The man who does not understand the pleasures of indolence is not fit for a Canadian. His interests must be wide rather than deep. He should take delight in old houses, old inns, old churches, but he must not be a professed archæologist, or he will wish to use the river merely as a means of pursuing his tiresome investigations and not as an end in itself. *Surtout point de zèle* should be inscribed on the bows of every canoe. The enthusiast in architecture, the keen angler, the investigator of flora and fauna, the collector of bugs and slugs are out of place in her. The perfect companion in a canoe takes a gentle interest in these things. He bestows on them an appreciative glance but not profound study. His real pleasure is in the summer sunshine, the shady trees, the contemplative cow in the rich water meadows, the village church with its time-worn gargoyles, the village green with its irate hissing geese, the blue flash of the kingfisher as he darts across the stream, and the gorgeous green dragon fly. He must not be a great talker. A desultory remark now and then seldom requiring the tribute of an answer illumines the golden gulfs of silence. Something of a philosopher withal, a spectator of all time and all existence, who, stretched at full length on cushions in the bows, idly watches the banks gliding by with half-shut eyes like a sleepy cat before the red blaze of a fire. One or other of you will probably be selfish, but it does not greatly matter which; whichever he is, he will be sure to get his own way, and that will prevent all

possibility of doubt as to what course the vessel will pursue when more than one is open to it. Good temper of course is essential in one or other of you, it is not a bad thing in both. A sense of humour and a sense of comfort complete the catalogue. Only a man who appreciates comfort himself can make allowances for your own determination to be comfortable. With this equipment you may while away a summer holiday in a fashion the gods themselves might envy

ST. JOHN E. C. HANKIN

At the Sign of the Ship.

DR. WILSON'S account of 'Our Double Selves' in LONGMAN'S for December raises 'a number of the questions which nobody can solve.' All would be plain sailing if in these queer cases only a pair of selves—Jekyll and Hyde—were known, and if Jekyll always came first and Hyde second. We might say then that the educated left side of the brain had abdicated in favour of the uneducated primitive right side. Yet 'the crude explanation of "two" selves by "two" hemispheres of the brain,' as Professor James remarks, will not work, for 'the selves may be more than two' ('our name is legion'), 'and the brain-systems severally used for each must be conceived as interpenetrating each other in very minute ways.'

* * *

Mr. Weir Mitchell has republished the case of Mary Reynolds, a very dismal girl, who dwelt 'in the Pennsylvanian wilderness in 1811.' Mary did not come to breakfast one day; she slept for about twenty hours on end, and woke a new woman. She remembered nothing except a few words, and had forgotten everybody. In a few weeks she learned again to read and write, writing, oddly enough, from right to left, as some left-handed children do, and as 'automatic' writers often do. This looks as if Mary's right side of the brain had taken command, but *her* Miss Hyde did not come out, as in several of Dr. Wilson's stories. It was her Miss Jekyll that emerged. She had been dull and listless, the worst of company; now she was jolly, gay, and as fond of exploring Nature's beauties as Dorothy Wordsworth. She declined to believe in bears, and when a big bear stopped her horse she dismounted, walked up to it with a stick, and drove it away. This state lasted for five weeks, then she awoke her dismal old self again; and she was in each condition alternately till, at twenty-six, she became her second self for good, and so remained till her sudden death at the age of sixty-one. Which self was her *real* self? If one self

sinned, and the other self was virtuous, how would a future state of rewards and punishments meet the case? Surely the *first* state was the morbid one—the Mr. Hyde.

* * *

Probably many people know the sense of double personality under a slight fever. A most intimate friend of mine caught a cold on his way to a cricket-match. He slept at an inn; his room was far from the level of the ground. All night he seemed to be struggling with a fellow whom he was trying to throw out of the window; and he would have done it, too, but there was a *third* fellow who kept advising him not to do it. Luckily he listened to the third fellow, or his team would have found a deceased bowler on the pavement in the morning. How he played next day, and whether he tried to catch himself out or not, history does not relate.

* * *

The oddest cases of all occur when the patient deliberately provokes a secondary personality, falls into it, speaks in a new voice, and when out of it again knows nothing of what happened in the new condition. This is the way of 'inspired' or 'possessed' people—professional seers. In Fiji, China, or Boston (Mass.) they merely sit in contemplation for a few minutes, and off they go, perhaps, with convulsions. In Mr. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* there are instances of converted savage diviners who confessed that they did not know what occurred in their second state, when they prophesied, and so on, or made poetry. Mr. James is acquainted with a white woman who, he is certain, knows things in her secondary state of which she is (and has always been) ignorant in her first or normal state. It is true that these things are not worth knowing, still he wants to know how she knows them. Miss Lurancy Vennum, aged fourteen, suddenly became Miss Mary Roff, who had died mad when Lurancy was only two. Like Miss Reynolds, she forgot all her own people, but she went a step further, and remembered all Miss Roff's. So she went and stayed with the Roffs, reminded them of 'hundreds of incidents' in Mary Roff's life, and was quite a daughter to them. How she knew the Roff details is a little puzzling. Mr. Podmore, I observe, says, 'Mary Roff died in a lunatic asylum, and it is not unlikely that her tragic history possessed a morbid interest for her little neighbour, . . .' who was only two when Mary expired;

a fact for which Mr. Podmore does not solicit our attention. After eight weeks bits of Vennum memories began to recur to Miss Vennum, and at last her normal old consciousness returned: she grew quite well, married, and had a family. This startling anecdote is from Mr. James's *Principles of Psychology*. Mr. James has no theory of Lurancy's case, but had she not been humoured she would probably have become a lunatic. What an awful thing it would be to marry one of those women! The marriage should be dissolved, as an innocent bigamy. But a good many married persons appear to think that the wife's (or husband's, or both) is a 'secondary personality,' not in the least resembling that of the sweetheart or lover who used to be. However, the law is still of a different opinion, unaltered by moral novels about the positive duty of deserting one's husband and eloping with somebody else.

* * *

The duty always seems to be on the lady's side. I never read a novel where the moral husband, bored by 'one unceasing wife,' finds that his purity is outraged by fidelity, runs away with his typewriting lady, and is applauded for his virtue. Yet this conduct seems as laudable in him as undeniably (if viewed from a hill-top) it would be in his wife. Why, then, is this glorious example never held up to our admiration? Sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander; it never is in this world. But the new morality has gone out with the big sleeves.

* * *

The story of Dr. Ferroul's *clairvoyante*, who 'clairvoyed' and read a letter, lying at a distance, wrapped in silver paper, in a sealed envelope, does not surprise me. I have heard of Dr. Ferroul before, and of similar, or even superior, feats performed by the same young woman. If we look for an explanation in fraud, we may suppose that Dr. Ferroul cleverly opened the letter and cleverly sealed it up again. Or we may say that the writer of the letter, Professor Gresset, at Narbonne, wrote or wired the contents of his envelope to the girl at Montpellier, and, with her aid, took in Dr. Ferroul. Of course I could not dream of making such charges against either gentleman; but people who insist on fraud must accuse one or the other, or both. Dropping fraud, we need not fly to clairvoyance. If one human being can tap the brain of another at a distance, then the young woman at Montpellier may have read the mind of Professor Grasset at Narbonne

and so discovered the contents of the envelope. Of one thing we are sure. Put a note for 1,000 francs in the sealed envelope; lock it in a box; show the box yourself to the lady, promising her the note if she reads the number on it, and you will keep your note. I would gladly provide the note, if allowed to conduct the experiment, expecting to keep my money or get my money's worth of astonishment. These experiments, 'with money in it,' never succeed. People may say that excitement puts the girl 'off her game.' Then one need not tell her that a bank-note is in the envelope, but give it to her (without any previous promise) if she guesses right. No regular experiment before a crowd of Narbonne *savants* will work. I don't much wonder at it, as *savants* hustle and frighten the subject terribly.

* * *

Pixies, or pisgies, are common objects in Devonshire. Mr. Purton describes them as follows:—

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA.

Have I zeed the pisgie roamin'
Yonder by the dam;
Have I heerd un, in the gloamin',
Whisper round the clam?

No, zur, never yet; tes ever
Dunkey, cow, or lamb;
Zoon as I gets near un, never
Pisgie of the clam.

Rackoned, zure, we'd cotched un tidy,
Me and brother Zam,
Walkin' in the dimpse o' Vriday
Down the Lower Ham.

'Watt be thick?' says I, a-backin'
Right 'pon top o' Zam;
'Zoundeth like a cart-whip crackin'
Down agin the clam.'

'Zee, there's zummut white a-hidin'
Over right the clam!
Zims to I 'tis volly bidin';
Shall us urn?' zays Zam.

'Urn, thee zany, watt be veard on ;
 Wold Nick or his dam ?
 Ghoosts don't coort, that ere I heerd on,
 Zettin' on the clam ;

'Tidden pisgie, tidden vairy ;
 Lookee, zure I am,
 Tes Johnson's Joe an' Jones's Mary
 Kissin' on the clam.'

'Think o' thick girt, zour, contráry,
 Lumpin' lout,' zays Zam,
 'Kissin' Varmer Jones's Mary
 Crossin' of the clam !'

WALTER T. PURTON.

Clam, a small foot-bridge ; *dimpse*, twilight ; *thick*, that ;
urn, run.

* * *

'Dorians make speak Doric, I suppose,' says the Syracusan woman in Theocritus. But Scotch historians must not quote Scotch in citing old letters in that language. This, at least, seems to be the opinion of a reviewer in the *Athenæum* of Mr. Hay Fleming's *Mary Queen of Scots*. He doubts if one Southron reader in fifty will be able to interpret 'a knapescall for her head, and dagg at her saddle.' Now, first, the quotation was not from any Scot, but from an English ambassador. Secondly, 'dagg' is an English word for 'pistol'—so 'Scotch' that it is used by Beaumont and Fletcher, by the English ambassador at Paris, by Archbishop Laud, and other English writers. If Southron students of history don't know their own language, they need not therefore call it 'unnecessary Scotch.' As for knapescall, Mr. Swinburne (applauded by the reviewer) also cites it, without explanation. It needs none. What did warriors wear on their heads when expecting a tussle? Steel head-pieces, of course. Yet not one Southron reader out of fifty could come to this obvious interpretation! Historians of any other people—French, German, Italian, Spanish—may, and do, quote from these languages, in documents, chiefly to illustrate the speech of the time. Southron students of history are supposed to be educated enough to know foreign languages, but not educated enough to understand old words or old forms of spelling in their own language. 'Dagg,' for instance, is

not a 'Scottish word' at all, as the reviewer alleges. If other Southrons know no better than he does, of course we must be sorry for them. But I conceive that it is chiefly reviewers who, judging by their own ignorance, probably, think that their fellow-countrymen are so puzzled. The celebrated donkey, in the *Quarterly*, long ago, described *Old Mortality* as being written 'in a darkened dialect of Anglified Erse.' It is notorious that the English public, though totally unacquainted with 'Erse,' read *Old Mortality* with perfect satisfaction. This ignorance in reviewers is either real, and very discreditable to educated men, or it is part of a silly traditional affectation.

* * *

I am inclined to believe that I have made a discovery in folklore. We all know the *fées*, fairies, who come to a child's cradle, and make prophecies about his future. They come in Perrault's Tales, which he based on tradition; but I do not remember their occurrence in really popular stories taken down from the mouths of peasants. In popular stories, though we call them 'fairy tales,' fairies very seldom occur, even where fairies are still seen and heard, as in *Lochaber*. The fairy superstition deals with carrying babies away, taking you into underground realms, and so on; it is not concerned with fairy godmothers at christenings, as in Perrault, Madame d'Aulnoy, and the other courtly narrators to whose stories we are all accustomed. Thus I think that the fairy godmothers, prophetesses at birth, givers of gifts, are of quite another class from pixies, Scotch and Welsh 'women of peace,' Nereids in modern Greece, and Fiji, Maori, Kanaka, or Samoan fairy women of the woods. They do not come to christenings, and, if to births, only to steal children, not to make presents or prophecies. The real fairies are a complex of myths about the underground ghosts of the dead, of real hallucinations (like the fairy seen on the *Lochy* lately), and of poetical fancies about fair fatal wood-women, and women of wells and streams.

* * *

Who, then, are the godmother *fées* of Perrault and of Madame d'Aulnoy? They, I think, descend from the old Egyptian *Hathors*, divine prophetic beings who prophesied the child's luck at his birth. You shall encounter them in M. Maspero's collection of Egyptian popular tales, written about 1,500 years before Christ. In Greek they are the Three *Moirai*, who come and

prophesy at the birth-bed of Meleager, and identify his life with the burning of the brand on the hearth. They are also, I think, the Latin *Fata*, whether *fée* is connected with *Fata* or not. These beings are all quite distinct from fairies, except in Perrault and the rest of the *literary* writers.

* * *

Next, who are the *Moirai*, Hathors, *Fata*, who predict the child's future at his birth? They, I fancy, are merely the *spae-wives*, who, in Scotland, tried to divine the fortunes of the newborn baby. In Africa Miss Kingsley writes: 'Miss Plessor told me that shortly after a child is born some of the elderly female relatives meet together and find out, by their magic, what the child's Ibet during life is to be. When they have done so, it is made known, and the child has to keep to it.' An Ibet is a thing sacred and forbidden to the child; he may not eat it; it is a kind of personal totem—the Red Indian private and personal Manitou. What a child's Ibet is to be is discovered by different means in different countries. Elsewhere, probably in Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, I think I have read of old *spae-wives* discovering the child's Ibet. At all events, the old African wives '*spae*' at the birth-bed; in a sense the brand was Meleager's Ibet, or life-token. If such a custom prevailed in ancient Egypt (as many Gold Coast customs did), and in Greece and Rome, as in Scotland, our question is answered. *Moirai*, Hathors, *Fata*, are deified *spae-wives*, the *spae-wives* of the gods. They are quite distinct from fairies, and only now confused by us through the agency of Perrault, and Madame d'Aulnoy, and the rest, writing about 1700. We know for certain that these authors introduced fairy godmothers, *fées*, to take the part played by animals, cows, calves, and sheep, in the genuine popular forms of the same stories. Fairies, then, are wood, and well, and heath women, or underground beings. Fairy godmothers, on the other hand, descend from *Moirai*, Hathors, *Fata*, and they from *spae-wives* of flesh and blood. I do not know for certain if all this is new, but I think it is neat. Of course the hypothesis wants working out in the classics and books of travel.

* * *

A novel which can be recommended is Miss M. E. Coleridge's *The King with Two Faces* (Arnold). I began it with a good deal of distrust; there are so many scores of new novels containing nothing that is not tediously familiar. Then Sweden in the eigh-

teenth century is a *terra incognita* to me, and, no doubt, to most novel readers. Explore this unknown land, students who care for an extremely vivid imagination, new incidents, curious turns of Fortune's wheel, strange complications of characters. Among modern historical romances this seems certainly one of the most vivid and unhackneyed. If I took it up with reluctance, I certainly laid it down with regret, wishing that I had another as good to fill its place. There is no abuse of description, but the rare brief passages of description are excellent. There is much promise in addition to plenty of actual performance, and, above all, there is not the smallest imitation of Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Weyman, Dr. Conan Doyle, or any other modern writer. The author is self-reliant, and any success which she may achieve she will win by her own hand. Of course, the romance cannot be recommended to people who dislike adventures and stories with scenes laid in foreign lands. Still, if ever they begin the book, it will hold them, like the Ancient Mariner.

* . *

Long ago, it might be thought, we have had enough and too much of Rossetti. Everybody, almost, who knew him in his unfortunate later days went to work and wrote about him. We had the posthumous indiscretions, not kind indiscretions, of old Mr. W. B. Scott : a pleasant patriarch to meet was he, but a dreadful patriarch to let loose on a man's reputation. Other authors, many who should have known better, wrote not so much on the character as on the pathology of Rossetti. Physicians and esoteric psychologists might be interested in a Rossetti altered by grief, sleeplessness, chloral, and the attendant train of baseless and jealous fancies. But one always felt sure that *that* was not the man. Even in his worst days of ruined self-control, Rossetti's letters to the ladies of his family showed a kind and considerate character. He did not break down in *these* epistles.

* . *

Dr. Birkbeck Hill, to whom we owe the most delightful of books, the best edition of Bozzy, the best collections of Johnsoniana, has now edited Rossetti's letters to the late Mr. Allingham. I did not know Mr. Allingham, beyond the slightest possible acquaintance; but a man always has a grateful memory of the editors who first accepted his early volunteered essays. Mr. Allingham, when he was Mr. Froude's *aide-de-camp* in *Fraser's*

Magazine, did me this kindness, and accepted, for example, an essay on that light popular topic, the *Kalevala*. Rossetti's letters to him, with full expiscations by Dr. Birkbeck Hill, show us the jolly schoolboyish poet and painter, with George Warington's honest old slang about 'stunners.' The Marchioness of Waterford, who had so much genius for colour in her drawings, and a pretty barnmaid at La Belle Sauvage Inn were equally 'stunners' in Rossetti's language. He was not suspicious and jealous in those days, though he did not believe in the R.A.'s of the hour. His remarks on perhaps the only young painter of genius, Leighton, who was not connected with the P.R.B., are full of sound criticism. In fact Rossetti, with his double genius, seems then to have been as unaffected a lad as any in a school Eleven, and as true a lover as ever was sinful man. A passion that always trembled under the imminent wings of Death was followed by his great bereavement, which broke the health and then the nature of Rossetti, bringing insomnia—madness lies that way—and resort to 'drowsy syrups,' and the suspicions which are an early symptom of a ruined brain. It is on the changed man, no longer himself at all, of the later years that biography has dwelt, when silence would have been the best comment. The Rossetti who wrote as he did to a maiden aunt, on his poem of 'Jenny,' is the Rossetti whom we should remember and regret. Dr. Birkbeck Hill has again done a real service to the cause of friendly biography. Perhaps he might take Pope up next in a friendly spirit; Pope's biographers, as a rule, have detested him, and Mr. Courthope has not the pen of the agreeable gossip, though loyal to his 'biographee,' as Mr. Gladstone says.

* *

Professor Lombroso would have delighted in the later Rossetti; he suits the Professor's theory of the insanity of genius. The learned Italian even makes out Mr. Darwin to have been 'considerable of a lunatic.' He did not believe in these uncommonly early stone weapons of which Mr. Bell wrote in *LONGMAN'S* for January. He did not believe in hypnotism. Mr. Darwin, no doubt, did not pin his faith to these things on the moment when he first heard of them. Nobody ought to accept such novelties at a word. But Mr. Darwin is made out to be equally mad because he was not sceptical enough, because there was no experiment which he was not ready to try. Thus, as Professor Lombroso points out, he had a bassoon played under a flower—no doubt to

see whether or not the plant was sensitive to the vibrations. Why not? We all know the sensitive plant; for all we can say Orpheus with his lute might make it show an intelligent interest. Indeed, Herr Moll, in his work on *Hypnotism*, praises Mr. Darwin for this very experiment, as a proof that his mind was perfectly open. He went to a *séance* once, but was fearfully bored, and left before the medium began shifting the furniture. He sent Mr. Huxley to another show of the kind, and was convinced that nothing short of 'an enormous mass of evidence' could prove the truth of anything but trickery. Professor Lombroso himself was a witness to the dodges of Eusapia; yet he probably thinks himself, and no doubt justly, as sane as his neighbours. Yet he gravely tells us that Shakespeare and Milton had no children (Burns kept up the average, to be sure), and that Sir Walter Scott was uncommonly thin—about fourteen stone, I should say, from all accounts. Having known several boys of genius, Professor Lombroso found them little concerned about what did not affect themselves. I seem to have remarked a similar indifference in boys of no genius at all. They are not 'soaring human boys' as a general rule. Luckily most of his insane geniuses are foreigners, and the more of madness the less of genius did they commonly exhibit. Cardan, for example, was many times more mad than clever, and I fear that Professor Lombroso's celebrated book, *The Man of Genius*, is—but do not let us be rude!

ANDREW LANG.



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